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PIPPIN



EVELYN VAN BUREN



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"Good-by, Dad"

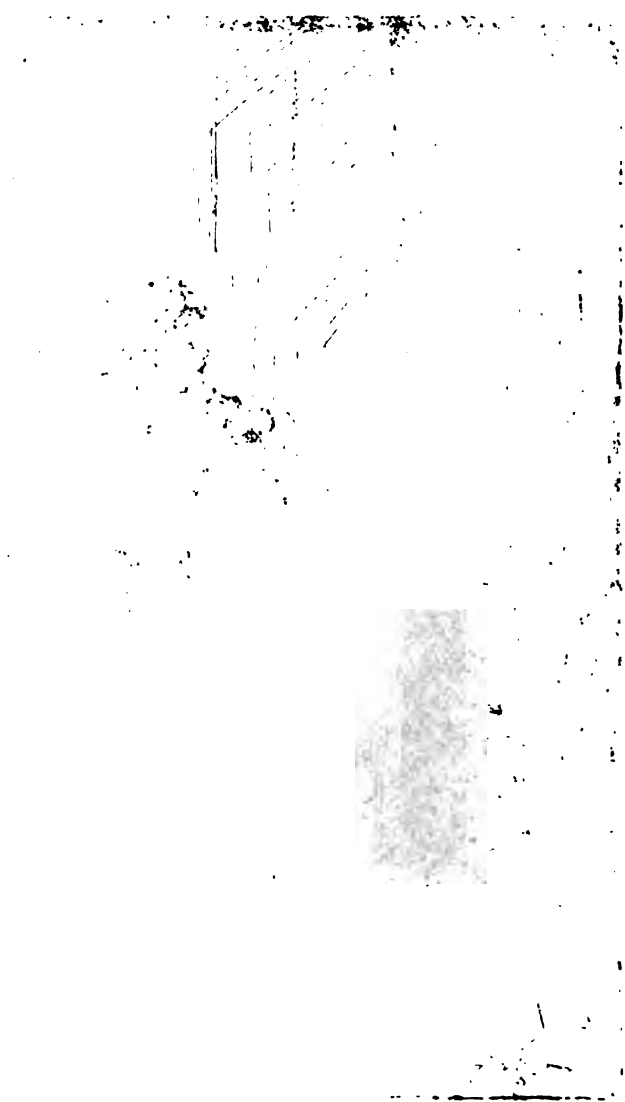
PIPPIN

BY
EVELYN VAN BUREN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
REGINALD B. BIRCH



NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1913



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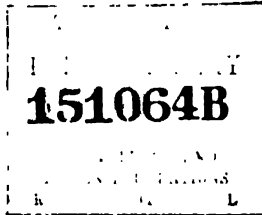
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TO
MY MOTHER

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PIPPIN

PIPPIN

CHAPTER I



IPPIN was down on her luck. This depressing state of affairs was hard to bear, with her father and young brother dependent on her ability to provide. And it was not quite as though she lacked the ability. She had a very clever knack of getting money. But of late she had turned against her method. Her conscience troubled her; owing to these twinges of conscience she had been in tight places several times lately but never in so tight a place as now, since she first acquired her easy knack of obtaining money. For days she had done nothing in her line.

"Hal darling," she was saying coaxingly to the small brother, "I've made you this bit of toastie. We'll half it, see, and put the bits together. So! Shut your eyes, think of marmalade, take a bite and what ho!"

"I'd like to please you, Pippin dear," he looked up into his sister's face, "but why not we really 'ave marmalade and let Dad do a bit o' fancyin'!"

Pippin stood up to take a look at the boy. She opened her eyes in exaggerated astonishment.

"What 'll you 'ave Dad fancy about, old chap?"

He hunched his thin shoulders and spread out his arms in their loose sleeves upon the table at which he sat.

"'Ave 'im fancy 'e's got that new checked wais'-coat, 'e's 'oping you to buy 'im!" He gave a sadly humorous little chuckle. "I would n't mind fancyin' about some things but it is 'ard doing so much of it about your tea. I likes me marmalade just ever so, Pippin!"

She swooped upon him with pitying kisses.

"Dear old fellow! It ain't all Dad's fault, duckie. It's your Pippin gettin' notions in 'er 'ead!"

Suddenly releasing him she drew from her pocket, a deep one in the folds of her full skirt, a cotton bag and upon the table emptied it of coppers and silver. Hal's dark eyes lit at the sign of affluence; he eyed the money greedily.

"There y' are!" he said, with relief.

"You shall have some marmalade, little 'un," she suddenly promised, counting over the money. "There's enough to do what I've been saving for; get Their Majesties 'ome from where Dad likes to keep 'em, with his Uncle Solomon."

Little Hal chuckled again at this. His sister seldom said such funny things of their dad.

"There, there, duckie!" she chided gently, seeing she had encouraged the lack of parental respect in her small brother.

Father and son were not chums. She sighed and raised her eyes from the money to the two unfaded squares of wall-paper, that indicated the absence of accustomed hangings.

"Mar's dying words," she recalled musingly, "was about Their Majesties—Dad and Their Majesties. 'E'll put 'em in, dear,' she said to me, 'and I leaves you to get 'em out.' *She* always did! 'Ow mar loved Their Majesties—Dad an' Their Majesties! 'Be patient with your dad, child,' she said the very last; 'I leave 'im in your care!'"

Little Hal tugged at her skirt.

"You'd best put the money back. You don't want Dad to come in an' see it, I fancy!"

She scooped the coins back into the bag and returned it to her pocket.

"Suppose now you stop 'ere quiet, while I slips round to Solomon's and fetches Their Majesties 'ome. They's time to do it before Dad comes in to tea, eh, old chap!"

"If you like," the old chap leaned back patiently.

His little face was very white beneath the shock of red hair.

Pippin regarded him anxiously.

"You do go off without your meat puddings, my word you do. Try to nibble a bit on the toastie, there's a dear." She kissed him and catching up her cap hurried out.

Hal stared at the expectant squares of wall-paper.

"She'll bring Their 'Ighnesses 'ome and 'ang them up," he complained in his tired drone, "and we'll 'ave puddings with our tea and sugar in it for a bit and then Dad'll sneak Their 'Ighnesses back to Solomon's and they'll be another spell like this; and then Pippin'll save up to get 'em out and it'll go on forever, I dare say."

His head drooped to his arm upon the table, his eyes closed.

It was the unbelievable sound of something grating and gritting in a cup that roused him. He opened his eyes. Pippin stood near; from a spoon she held sugar sifted slowly into a mug of milky tea. She raised it to his lips; he drank deeply and lifting his eyes discovered the return of Their Majesties to their places upon the wall. Hal drew breath and drank again, looking up to the framed smiling face of King Edward and his beautiful queen.

"Is it better with the sugar, darling? And 'ere's your toastie really spread with marmalade now. And," Pippin bent and whispered, "are you glad to see 'em?" She pointed toward the pictures over the mantelshelf.

He nodded, looking again at the dignified faces of Their Majesties.

"You are good, Pippin," he sighed, "and it's rippin' to see Their Majesties 'ome again." He bit at the toast. Then he added slyly, "It'll not be long till old Sol's got 'em back!"

Pippin sighed too.

"'Be patient with your dad,' was Mar's last words," she again recalled musingly. "My word, was n't she patient with 'im! 'E's got the true instincts of a gentleman and can't 'elp it,' *she* always said. Mar *thort* Dad a gentleman."

Pippin brushed savagely at her sudden tears.

"I gave me solemn word I'd look after 'im same as she did. I gave me word I'd keep Their Majesties 'ome. It was n't 'ome without 'em to Mar."

The recalling of her mother's words and her own promise was like a quick prayer to still the inward tumult of rebellion.

"Yer does awright, Pippin. I've even 'eard Dad s'y so!" comforted little Hal.

Then at the sound of shuffling footsteps on the stairs, he hunched his shoulders, his head hung sullenly. Pippin quickly brought another chair to the table.

"Evenin', children." A thin little man with beady eyes came in.

Pippin's father had a manner of feeling his way cautiously; he practised a turtle-like movement of

the head and neck. Upon the table he placed several small packages, then drew a dark bottle from his pocket. This was his evening meal purchased from what Pippin gave him. He sat down, poured the fluid from the bottle into a tumbler, filled it with water, helped himself from the packages, and ate. With audible enjoyment, his head tipped backward, he drank deeply, when suddenly over the rim of his glass his eye met His Majesty's.

"Ah," he said, "you've got 'em back, Pippin!" Pippin nodded.

"What's 'e starin' at, Pippin? Why ain't 'e a-bed?" fretted her father. His eyes had dropped angrily to his son's. Little Hal stared back boldly.

Quickly Pippin drew the offender in his chair to the window. With uncanny comprehension and aversion the son withdrew his somber gaze from the paternal countenance.

"'Ave a sniff of the fish frying downstairs, duckie," urged Pippin.

This privilege came from living on the first floor over a fried-fish shop. Pippin took a sniff herself and then hurried across the room to the remarkable specimen of antiquity in the corner — a chest of drawers.

"Ah," her father smacked his lips; "you've got me new wais'coat to-noit?"

She frowned. Several days ago she had promised he should have it soon.

"I've not, Dad," she admitted. "The little nipper was 'ungry and Their Majesties 'ad been in ever so long, as you know!"

Her dad eyed the boy.

"'Ungry was 'e! 'E does n't care about 'is dad, not 'im!"

He looked back at Their Majesties. He never disapproved their return to the fold, because their presence represented ready money as soon as he needed to claim it. Suddenly he looked at his daughter.

"Did n't 'ave the money for the wais'coat, eh? You must be very short then. I've no patience with you. An' you so clever too!" He stared back as she turned her eyes sharply upon him.

"Why, Dad Raymond, wotcher mean!"

Mr. Raymond smiled faintly.

"What do I mean?"

He drank off the mixture in his glass. He waited a moment, during which he squinted at the green bottle. It gave him courage and a firm resolve. He rose. Any slight timidity he felt was overcome by the bullying air he assumed.

"I could 'ave a good 'ome and a new missus if it was n't for me children, especially if it was n't for *you*!"

There was a moment's silence.

"Wotcher mean, Dad Raymond?" Pippin said again, in astonishment.

"I mean to s'y," he went on emboldened by her disarmament, "that the widow Flossie Fullerton down 'ere end o' the Lane would 'ave me — she would 'ave me if it was n't for me children, most especially if it was n't for you!"

He retreated a step or two, placing the chair between them as Pippin came quickly nearer.

"Been courting, 'ave you? Courting! That's what I've kept you dossed up for of evenings. That's what the wais'coat is wanted for! The widow Flossie Fullerton, too! Another missus —!"

She came close and a sudden gesture swept the tumbler over.

"Look out!" Dad Raymond said; "now don't mike a row, or I'm off. I am only tellin' yer, Pippin; I'm only tellin' yer!"

"She'd 'ave yer, would she, if it was n't for your children — for me!"

"That's it," he said, bucking up again. "It's you! She hints at things you do. It's not very pleasant for me."

"Ho!" Pippin came nearer. "It ain't so much me, as the w'y I gets me money —" she blurted out savagely.

"I'm surprised at your 'arshness," Dad Raymond whined. "What would your mar s'y?"

"That's it," Pippin nodded. "What *would* my pore mar s'y!"

She banged a solid little fist on the table.

He turned, opened the door, and was gone!

Pippin stood for a moment staring at the wooden panels of the door, which had banged in her face. She turned slowly. Little Hal drowsing, in spite of the row, had scarcely taken in its meaning. She went to the window and stood looking out.

The Raymonds had lived in Thistledown Lane for three years. There, frail Mrs. Raymond, having got her family moved in and settled, was suddenly seized with an ailment that had no name. She said she was just fagged. The struggle was short. She turned over the care of the ornamental but highly improvident Mr. Raymond to her young daughter, and having received Pippin's tearful promise to keep him a gentleman, her tired body relaxed and her overfond heart ceased to beat.

Pippin was very young then. Her effort to fill her mother's engagements at charring were unsuccessful. Her lack of strength and speed met with complaints, and her pay, scarcely sufficient at best for the needs of a family with a gentleman at the head, dwindled cruelly to almost nothing. Mr. Raymond complained bitterly then and took the pictures of Their Majesties from their places over the mantleshef and left them with old Solomon. Little Pippin cried bitterly.

"That's enough o' that," her father stated sternly. "Look sharp an' earn the money an' you've got 'em back!"

The first thing she saw while "looking sharp" was a young woman managing a very clever thing in the Fulham Road, not far from the Lane. The young woman was in a purple velvet gown, and she wore the highest of heels and her stockings matched her gown. She was standing outside a green-grocer's, eyeing some bananas and suddenly an elderly lady, carrying a black leather bag, pushed past her and stopped to examine some luscious fresh figs through her lorgnon.

The purple velvet one turned her attention from the bananas to the black leather bag of the elderly lady. She rubbed up against her, wedging the bag between them, and while eagerly manifesting mutual interest in the figs, the hand nearest her victim stole out, deftly opened the black bag, extracted a coin-purse, and noiselessly reclosed the bag. She looked covertly round as she backed off. The dark-eyed, wondering and even admiring gaze of little Pippin on the curb met hers. The young woman hovered for an instant in alarm, on the verge of flight, but no one else had seen. The elderly lady decided against the figs and hurried away; the shop-keeper returned within; the purple one giggled. Then Pippin laughed. The girl walked away and Pippin followed when she was beckoned; that was the beginning of her friendship with Doll.

It was not long before she surpassed Doll in the art of picking a pocket, and soon thereafter Mr.

Raymond complained less and for some time Their Majesties remained in their places over the mantel. Pippin had learned to "look sharp."

At first she played the game with roguish delight. She enjoyed her friend's flattering praise. There was Doll and Doll's Harry and Harry's sister, Kitty. Pippin had for a while shared spoil with them. But she grew older. Doll was without honor; she did not play fair and got herself disliked by little Pippin for her sly tricks upon her. She longed for other companionship. Distaste of her shady methods gradually grew upon her. She was frequently unable to do anything. And then very lately too, she had made another acquaintance — a tall, slender young man of pleasant, persuasive manner and honest face. She had declined Dandy's attentions with the awful fear that he might find out the kind she was. She was not fit to associate with him! And so her moral standard suddenly distorted, had become more normal again — and Pippin suffered.

She stood looking down at Hal, then moved uneasily. It was very warm to-night and though she liked the fragrance from the shop below, of fish frying in oil, just now it seemed a little heavy; indeed it hung over the street like a cloud.

Slowly the idea of her future without Dad Raymond spread out before her.

Her mind traveled to the house at the end of

Thistledown Lane. She recalled the widow Fullerton's windows. There were none cleaner in London! The luxury of her little sitting-room could be viewed any evening in its glowing comfort from the street. This was a privilege the widow enjoyed affording the Lane.

"Perhaps it would be a good thing for 'im to 'ave the widow Floss!"

She looked round in the darkness; the bare little room needed no light to recall its familiar dinginess. A contrasting picture came to her mind. Dad Raymond neatly attired, taking tea in the little sitting-room with the handsome Flossie, seated there comfortably, happily at home with her. And Pippin free! She gave a little joyous gasp. What a release it would mean — to her — and little Hal she could easily provide for.

"Dad 'd be looked out for, and I 'd be on me own and able to go — str'ight."

She spoke the word whisperingly, hopefully. She thought of different occupations she would like. A lady's maid seemed most respectable and of a high order of domesticity. There might be need of some other arrangement for little Hal, but never mind. It was a good idea anyway.

First and foremost her dad must be helped along in the courtship. She went to the ancient chest of drawers that toppled drunkenly in the corner. From it she took a coat and trousers of wonderful

zebra design, shaking and examining them carefully. Not a button was missing, every sign of wear was neatly darned.

She placed them on a chair-back, adding a scarlet waistcoat, brave in brass buttons if a little frayed and faded, a high collar and cravat of green. She inspected each article closely and with pride. From her pocket she drew a small box and, opening it, looked over the contents, a stick-pin, a fob and a tooth in gold setting. These ornaments when not aiding her father's dignity she kept upon her to prevent them from going in at Solomon's. Holding them, she sat down to wait. Her father she knew would soon return. His tempers seldom lasted long.

The clock beneath the pictures of Their Majesties struck. It was getting late. But a cautious shuffling sounded on the landing! The door opened slowly and Mr. Raymond peered in. Pippin jumped up.

"Come along, Dad," she urged reassuringly. "It's awright. You've no call to be afeared of me. Come in!"

"Oh, very well," he acquiesced amiably.

"Dad," she began, "I dare s'y I was 'arsh—"

"That's awright," he said. "But yer know I can't stand rows!"

"It's your daughter's place to help, not 'inder, and I means to. Flossie can make you 'appier than

what I can, so go ahead, I s'y! I won't stand in your w'y. I'll be off!"

Dad Raymond stared.

"I've been wanting to take a berth as—as lady's maid—an' now I'll 'ave a go at it. Me an' the little fellow will be off."

Dad Raymond looked at his son.

"Flossie *would* tike 'im," he admitted reluctantly.

"Not it!" cried Pippin. "No woman's got to take care of Mar's children. I've looked after Hal for three years and I want to keep on."

"You're a good gal, Pippin; you always was!" the father admitted, brightening.

His face suddenly broke into smiles. "Ever seen Flossie?" he asked.

Pippin nodded.

She recalled the plump widow's prosperity as well as her rather florid beauty, the cause of such vigorous discussion among Mrs. Fullerton's feminine neighbors.

"From what I hear said 'ere about the Lane, Dad, they's them besides you likes 'er. There's the tobacconist next door 'ere—"

"She can't 'elp *that*," said Mr. Raymond. "You need n't s'y so either, but 'e's no chance."

"Certainly not," agreed Pippin; "an' ain't she got the cleanest windows, an' such window-boxes!"

"Many's the butting'-ole I've—" Mr. Ray-

mond broke off confusedly. It would not do to let on about the boutonnieres made and presented to him by Flossie's own fair hand, for he had promptly sold them. They brought a penny each. Mr. Raymond had a keener appreciation of money-value than of sentiment.

Pippin indicated his clothes on the chair-back.

"Dad," she said, "I've kept me promise to Mar. I've done me best for you. I've kept Their Majesties 'ome as much as possible. Perhaps I ain't been to you what Mar would 'ave been but you've not seemed to me quite what you did to pore Mar, most particular of lite. But I fancy I'd stuck to you and we'd gone on deceivin' each other if it 'ad n't 'appened as it 'as."

She stepped a little nearer him.

"Now I will go aw'y. You can tell Flossie I've mide off — run aw'y. I'd like runnin' aw'y from you, Dad," she admitted brutally, "but there was the promise to Mar and — and," her voice softened then; "well, a gal's dad is 'er dad and I'd 'ave worried about you; but now I'm going to run aw'y. You'll not know where, so it's truth yer can tell Flossie."

A smile ventured still further to soften his face, but Pippin went on severely.

"You're to give me a promise, Dad Raymond!"

He stared back at her.

"You're never to look me up, never to see me if

we meets unless I seem to see *you*. I've me reasons, I'll know what's best for us both; do yer promise?"

His shaking hands pressed his collar down, his head jerked upward.

"Anythink you like," he said.

"Then s'y yer promises; s'y, 'I promises'!"

"Lummy," he fretted, "I promises right enough. You'll tike the boy?"

"Rather!" agreed Pippin. "Yer can go to 'er and s'y, 'Flossie, I've got no children now, I've got nothink; will yer be mine?' and she'll tike you." Looking him over, she added warningly, "Don't 'ave 'er see you without your tooth, Dad. You seemed a gentleman to pore Mar and Flossie might like to fancy the same."

She held out her hand.

"We'll be gone before yer up in the mornin'."

Mr. Raymond gave his hand weakly, his eyes resting upon his daughter. He appeared suddenly reluctant to lose her.

"Buck up, Dad, and I wish yer 'appiness. Now get into your clothes!"

Mr. Raymond gathered them up and retired to the privacy afforded by the two threadbare skirts joined together and hung from the ceiling, in the corner opposite the chest.

Very soon he emerged, a good imitation of a zebra in a scarlet waistcoat. Pippin hurried to tie

his green cravat. She added the dog's-head stick-pin, and handed him the fob.

"An' 'ere's your tooth; make it fast so it can't drop out when you're talkin' to 'er."

Mr. Raymond took it and, grimacing horribly, replaced a missing upper front tooth.

"Now, then," Pippin handed him his cap and walking-stick. He took them and walked slowly to the door.

"Good luck," Pippin called.

She went to the window and saw him go. Debonair and care-free he took his way to woo and win the belle of the Lane. Pippin sank upon her knees, looking across at the high board wall opposite, and, leaning farther out, she got a glimpse of the King's Road, out of which Thistledown Lane jutted. In the King's Road couples arm in arm, red-coated Tommys with their sweethearts, passed, sauntering homeward after a pleasant evening in the street. She thought eagerly of another little street not so far away and not much larger, to be sure, than the little Lane, but oh how different. She thought happily, too, of the tall slender youth of pleasing, persuasive manner! A belated street-organ suddenly started a popular number over in the King's Road. Pippin sprang up, giving exuberant vent to her hopes by executing a few dancing steps over the creaky floor. She was eager for tomorrow!

CHAPTER II



DAILY ablutions were as important to Pippin's comfort as her early morning cup of tea. Her face had the glow, contour, and splendid color of a firm red apple; christened Victoria, as she had been for the gracious queen who reigned over England at her birth, and Alexandra for the charming woman then princess of Wales, Pippin's resentment of the obvious cause of her nickname was not unjust though unavailing. Soap and water and hard scrubbing failed to remove the deep red of her cheek; trouble and hardship left its curve unbroken. Hers was not the style of beauty she most admired.

"To be pale and sweet, I'd give su'think," she often sighed.

Her hair was black. Upon her forehead a row of curls stuck into place by a forefinger moistened at the tip of the tongue, and a bun prominent at the back of her head, was her customary coiffure. Her eyes, which were nearsighted, had usually a deeply wondering gaze and the pupils dissolved softly into the dark background, giving an owlish

look when she was not scheming. She was short-limbed and plump. Buttoned tightly within a plain bodice attached to a full skirt, she hardly achieved the effect of slenderness to which she aspired.

Pippin made her toilet with care, early the morning after her determination to free Dad Raymond of the burden of his children.

Little Hal sat at the window watching her. His white face was bright, his joy restrained with difficulty. The sound of Dad Raymond's regular breathing from the unbeautifully curtained interior increased his anxiety to hurry flight before the parental awakening.

Pippin dragged the blanket from her bed, and spreading it upon the floor, neatly placed upon it such articles of wearing apparel as were theirs. From an old box that propped up the head of her legless bed, she took a secret possession — some bed linen! Between folds of newspaper, fragrant with the dried flower of sweet lavender, it was as her mother had left it — her wedding gift when a kind employer had parted with the faithful woman who became Mr. Raymond's bride. Pippin laid it with the rest and upon this pile, face to face, she placed the pictures of the King and Queen. Other cherished belongings; a gilt-rimmed cup, the mantel-clock, a knife, a two-pronged fork and a wooden spoon of carved ornamentation, she was careful to add.

"All these things pore Mar loved an' had give 'er," she said.

"Fancy," chuckled little Hal, "only fancy runnin' aw'y from Dad!"

He slipped from his chair, caught up his tattered cap, a cast-off, checked affair of his father's, and put it on peak to left that he might avoid total eclipse beneath it. His little body, tense with eagerness, was but a rack for the ill-fitting garments.

"Buck up, Pippin, do; let's be off!" he whispered, missing the heavy breathing, suddenly.

Pippin was at a drawer of the old chest that treasured her father's splendor. With usual care she brought out the zebra suit, scarlet waistcoat and other accessories to his adornment. She threw some sticks on the fire, left the teapot handy and took up her bundle. Her cotton dress was of clean and starchy coolness, piquantly set off by a small fur cap worn at so jaunty an angle as to appear glued to her head. The cap had long stuck to Pippin and, worn through all the changing seasons since her mother's death, it had seemed to decrease in size as Pippin's countenance filled out and broadened beneath it. She struck at it, gripped her bundle tighter, and motioned to little Hal. As they moved to the door the head of Dad Raymond popped from his apartment. Pippin halted.

"Good-by, Dad. Good luck! Shake 'ands with Dad, love!"

Father and son hurried the ceremony. Then Pippin moved with her long stride, leading Hal. They left the room and descended the narrow stairway.

Pippin had never mixed with others in the Lane. Consciousness of her method of livelihood had kept her fearfully aloof. Now she hurried along and hardly any one but the fried-fish man sweeping out his shop, witnessed the eager departure.

"Now," she said, as they came to a dairy in the King's Road, "'ere's where you're to 'ave a treat, duckie. Jubilee Court, the street where there's that room to let, I'm keen on, is just beyond and you'll stop 'ere with the bundle and tike your milk till Pippin goes about the room."

"We'll 'ave plenty of money now we're quit o' Dad, eh, Pip?" wisely observed Hal.

He climbed up on the high stool before the counter and as Pippin deposited the bundle on the floor beside him, he piped out his order for "a glass of milk and a bun with seeds in it, please 'm!"

"Bless the little man," remarked the pleasant woman behind the counter, while Pippin regarded with open admiration this sudden development of manliness.

Little Hal had always been fretful and dependent. She pushed back his cap, smoothed his hair and smiling, spoke indulgently.

"'E'll stop 'ere for a bit, if you don't mind. I've an errand down the street."

"'E'll stop 'ere and tike time to eat 'is bun, not to 'ave it a lump in 'is tummy," was the reply and his sister hurried away, nodding her thanks.

Pippin knew her London. It was vast. It was full of sudden congested little byways that led quickly from poverty to wealth. Jubilee Court had twin rows of five little houses, spick and span in fresh white paint with green trim. The end house in each row soared boastingly half a story higher than the others and like proud sisters looked down upon the little ones. Pippin loved Jubilee Court, yet it was not really unlike many another little street she might have chosen. She might have gone further away from the old one since she was to start a new life. But in the Court, which she had first discovered in seeking a short cut to the West End, she had lately loitered frequently. It had been for some time steadily growing upon her. It seemed such a friendly street, and the symbol of respectability. She glanced ahead and saw where the prim little court that led in narrow unpretention from Kings Road, burst suddenly into an array of fashionable private residences, that linked circling round a private impaled square. There the soft gleam of green met the eye soothingly. The great old trees fanned back a breeze; fenced in by the rich gentry, they yet remembered charitably, with dignified and cooling nods, the neighboring little court.

Pippin drew another quick breath. After all maybe it was too presuming to be trying for this. Then boldly she swung ahead. Again she marked the rows of white door-stones, the freshly painted doors and brass knockers, the line of clean, white-curtained windows. The flowering brilliance of the window-boxes almost surpassed those of Flossie Fullerton in beauty.

Between the curtains, every window displayed an ornament, a sacred sign of respectability. Here a small table with a vase of artificial flowers, there a lifelike exhibition of fruit. Tantalizingly real to Pippin, the purple plums or the blue grapes, and it seemed well indeed that a glass covered them. In one window there was a cage of love-birds. This display was exactly opposite the room to which Pippin aspired. But as she looked, she missed the sign that had been in the top-floor front window; a woman was there shaking a dust-cloth. Pippin stood staring up at her, black eyes narrowed in her nearsighted way.

"Well, miss?" inquired the woman eagerly, thrusting out her head, to gaze back at Pippin.

"Good morning," Pippin called out. "I came about the room you're doing now; I was 'oping to tike it!"

"Stop a bit," the woman answered and drawing in disappeared from view. She came down quickly to Pippin in the street.

"So it's let?" Pippin said. "I'm that disappointed you can't think; I'd got me 'eart set on this street!" There was a break in her voice. The woman eyed her.

"You 'ad, had you?" She looked the would-be tenant over. "Well, I've not let the room. I was only washin' the window. I am the caretaker, Mrs. Crimmins by nime, and I live in the back 'ere and I've the letting of the street!"

"Oh, that's it," said Pippin.

"You see," explained Mrs. Crimmins, continuing to examine the applicant critically, "they's all families in this street. One or two to a 'ouse. Just 'ere at the end," she nodded first at the room above, then to the little window opposite where the love-birds hung, "I let these top-floor odd rooms each to single lodgers being first certain they've got a character; in other words the rent fortnightly in advance."

She looked but detected no change in the girl's countenance. From the open window where the love-birds hung, there piped the sound of a flute. Mrs. Crimmins began to beat time.

"I've a flutist up there. Flutist in the Earl's-Court-Exhibition-Ladies'-Band!"

Pippin grinned in accompaniment, while her mind yearned eagerly to claim some equally becoming and alluring occupation for her own.

"'Ow much is the rent of the room?" she asked.

The caretaker ceased humming to look her over again.

"Why not 'ave a look at it; it's better to know what you 're bargaining for."

Pippin nodded to this quickly.

Within, the hall and stairs were laid with clean linoleum, the woodwork smelled of the fresh, green paint that matched the doors and window-boxes without. They passed a pretty girl on the stairs and Mrs. Crimmins paused and as Pippin came along, nudged her, whispering:

"A bride. Not long married an' 'e gives 'er three rooms—the whole floor, you may s'y!" She stooped to pluck up some of the feathers the bride's boa had shed upon the clean stairs. "You see I've tip-top 'uns and I'm obliged to 'ave me eyes open to keep the street up to what it is! Why I 'ave had gentle folks, ladies stopping in the Court! Out o' luck for the time, y' know or su'think —"

They came to the room and Mrs. Crimmins threw open the door. Pippin drew a quick fluttering sigh of delight.

"All furnished, not a stick needed; the very thing!" she cried.

She tripped round the room, observing the chest of drawers that stood so erect and brightly veneered, peering into the little wardrobe, patting the bed and leaning from the window to gaze across at the love-birds and into the Court below. She

swept back to the fireplace to admire the bric-à-brac of the mantelshelf, plucked aside the flowered curtains at hand and revealed the little cupboard. Her owlish eyes softened and glowed, her apple cheeks flushed and paled, the downward lines of her mouth curved pleasurably upward. It was a room for the person she was going to be. She saw herself in it, changed, industrious, proud, honest. Half-consciously she felt the power of environment. She faced Mrs. Crimmins with a little hopeful smile.

"It's fit for a lady," she said.

"Then you're lookin' out lodgings for another?" Mrs. Crimmins turned her head for the answer to be spoken in her right ear.

For another! It was an inspiration; for another she could talk freely, drive a bargain and plan. She stood briefly hesitating. Then a slow smile overspread her round face.

"The room is for a lady!"

Mrs. Crimmins dropped her cloak of aloofness.

"I wondered to meself when I see you come sailing down the street. I thort too, now there's mystery!"

"She's not a lady of wealth," Pippin said.

She had a clear plan now and glowed with impatience to clinch the bargain.

"What's the best, ma'am, you can let me the room for?"

"Five bob!" Mrs. Crimmins tapped familiarly at Pippin's tightly buttoned little bodice.

Pippin pursed her lips.

"Of course you know your price, Mrs. Crimmins. I don't want to 'aggle! Still I really can't manage above four bob!" she said.

"Very well," agreed the caretaker reluctantly; "four bob does it."

She wadded her window-cloth into one hand and held out the other. Pippin's impulse was to shake it, but instead she dipped into her pocket and besides a half crown (the price of Dad Raymond's check waistcoat, that it would now be another's pleasure to buy) she produced one shilling and sixpence. She dropped the money into Mrs. Crimmins's hand.

"Four shilling—that's only *one* week! A fortnight in advance is the regular custom," reminded Mrs. Crimmins, her hand remaining extended, jingling the coins.

"Funny thing," mused Pippin; "*she* thort one week 'd do it."

Mrs. Crimmins looked thoughtful.

"I've not got any more on me just now," Pippin added, "or I'd make it a fortnight."

She dropped her frock over the pocket of her underskirt with businesslike finality and went on quickly.

"I'm to tike possession till she comes. You'll

like 'er, ma'am, a lady, but not too much side or snubbin' superior w'ys."

She broke off. There was a new gleam in Mrs. Crimmins's eyes; was it doubt, suspicion or what?

"I does for 'er," Pippin added eagerly; "sews, and she likes me about. I'll need to be 'ere close till she comes."

"When ~~is~~ she coming?" asked Mrs. Crimmins.

Pippin struck at her cap.

"Not to-d'y; pre'aps not to-morrow." Then slyly, "She is watching 'er chance to — get aw'y."

Mrs. Crimmins pocketed the single week's rent.

"What's the lady getting aw'y from?" she asked.

"No doubt *she'll* tell you, ma'am, she's that open an' honest, but it would n't be quite right for me to."

"Young?" persisted the caretaker.

Pippin nodded.

"Young and beautiful!" she stated firmly.

"'Ere," said Mrs. Crimmins, seizing the arm of her visitor; she waved a hand over the room. "The lodger before the last in this room was a young woman that told 'ow she was a workin' gal —" Mrs. Crimmins closed one eye with her little finger. "She was a lady born and bred as ever I see. Trouble, love or su'think was upon her and it was plain she'd set 'erself to earn her own w'y. She was out all d'y an' every d'y up to the one that

she comes rushing down to me with a letter and a look on 'er face, so different from what she 'd been wearin' of; and what was it but that some one 'ad died out in India and fixed 'er for life with thousands o' pounds, I forget now 'ow many!"

"My word!" breathed Pippin.

"They's some things here," Mrs. Crimmins wafted the window-cloth over the household luxuries, "which she left for me, and though leavin' 'em in the room, I charges only sixpence extra and 'ope they'll bring luck to the next lodger same as to 'er that's gone! Five an' six is the price o' this room, so you can see 'ow I'm obligin' *you*. Four shilling — it's dirt cheap!"

"You're a very good woman, Mrs. Crimmins, I can see that!" enthused Pippin.

"I'm looking for character," the lady said, "but," she added, "I loves mystery! And of course it's my business to keep the rooms let!"

As Pippin gazed back at Mrs. Crimmins a little regretful pang stirred her. A quick impulse to confess, to open her heart and unburden it, moved her, but it passed and left her cold.

"There's my brother, little Hal," she began to explain. "'E'll stop along of me till the lady comes. She'd wish it. Mar's dead and Dad, bein' nervous, does n't like the little chap about."

At this Mrs. Crimmins snorted. "Your dad is no doubt a worm!"

"Dad's not quite that, ma'am," Pippin said.

"Don't defend 'im!" Mrs. Crimmins replied. "It reminds me of my Sally. She always defended her dad and look 'ow 'e treated 'er. Made 'er shift for 'erself at the tender age of eight."

"Cruel 'ard," murmured Pippin, tipping her head suddenly to read the gold lettering round the vase on the mantelshelf.

"But Sally's the kind to take opposite sides no matter what. She's older than you and 'as got a 'usband of 'er own now, but no children," Mrs. Crimmins went on.

She flicked at things with her duster, emphasizing her eager bursts of confidence.

"They've a inn out Hornsey Rise w'y and a bit of ground. I allow Sally me two youngest, Arthur and Bertie, 'er little brothers, for company. She keeps 'em in the pure air very reasonable an' so gives me a free 'and 'ere."

Pippin turned from the beauties of the room to regard Mrs. Crimmins with inquiry.

"'Ow much?" she then asked shortly.

"You could see Sally," Mrs. Crimmins reflected, approaching Pippin. "If she took a liking to the boy—"

"'E's a love," Pippin assured fondly. "It'd do 'im such good for a bit too, 'e's not robust. I'll be off, ma'am, an' fetch him for you to see."

And I wants to get the room settled — for the lady!”

“Ah,” said Mrs. Crimmins, “the room ~~is~~ in shape for the lady an’ my advice is to get the little chap packed off — fidgets ’is pore dad, do ’e?”

As Pippin went out the muttered words of Mrs. Crimmins floated after her:

“Another Crimmins — their own children makin’ ’em nervous!”

Pippin ran down the stairs and looked up and down the little street. She turned an appreciative ear to the rehearsing flutist. Her eyes devoured the flowering window-boxes, the fresh paint filled her nostrils. Her heart beat athrill with joy and pride. She belonged already. This was her new home — Jubilee Court.

CHAPTER III



TALL young man with a kindly, honest face paced along the Fulham Road. The vividly striped pattern of his clothes increased his slender height and closely outlined the angularity of his nimble limbs. He stopped frequently with an acrobatic manœuvre that bent his knees and whirled him round abruptly. Then he looked eagerly back along the street, turned again with a show of disappointment and resumed his way. He puffed a long stemmed pipe. His manner was partly playful; passing a fruit stand he snatched a handful of gooseberries, dropped them into his coat pocket and dodged into a convenient doorway near by. He saw the wrathful fruiterer come from the shop and after a moment of mischievous enjoyment, he gaily confronted him.

"'Ere you are," he said, extending some coppers. "I was only larking a bit!"

The shopkeeper laughed hugely at the joke and the two enjoyed a short chat.

It was the hour for morning marketing and the shops in Fulham Road were busy. Passing omni-

buses, too, were crowded and a-top of them parasols and gay head-gear gleamed in the June sunlight. The young man moved along but finally stopped on the curb where he ate the gooseberries and watched the people passing. A young woman sauntered past. She wore a purple hat with a stringy, purple feather upon it. Her purple velvet skirt dragged behind and only reached her ankles in front, displaying purple stockings and the high heels that caused her swagger gait. At once her roving glance was attracted by the somewhat conspicuously attired loiterer. She turned and came back slowly, gazing at the solitaire in his cravat with the fascination of a connoisseur of precious stones.

She passed back again more slowly and repassed, her eye upon the gem. But her antics were suddenly observed by the young man. He gave her a measuring glance, stared suspiciously and tucked the bordered silk handkerchief into his pocket. The purple one's nose went up in disgust. As she walked away she muttered, "Glass!" and turned to other things.

The youth touched his scarf-pin, felt his watch, and so reassured walked on in a thoughtful way. He was clearly out in the hope of meeting some one, very particular. He puffed at his pipe which had gone out and with his head thrust forward continued rather dejectedly on his way.

Suddenly out of Jubilee Court swept a girl. There was almost a collision.

"Dandy!" she gasped.

"What ho!" cried he, his face lighting as he looked at her. "My eye," he added, "I'd just about give up. I was going back along the road once more—I *am* glad to see you; 'ow are you, Victoria Alexandra?"

"Awright!" she returned shyly, and in embarrassed pleasure at her lover's use of her rightful name.

The color of her apple cheeks had won him but he did not call her Pippin.

She turned a shade pinker, touched at her cap and row of curls and suddenly recovering her sangfroid, she gave him a playful blow in the chest.

"G'on!" she said. "Wotcher dawdlin' about 'ere for; tell us!"

"I've spent the entire morning lookin' for your ladyship. I'm on a 'oliday," he answered, beaming upon her. "But 'ere; does a cloud darken your brow, Victoria Alexandra?" he asked solicitously as a sober look crossed her face. "Is su'think up? Anything a cove can do?"

"They's nothink," she answered quickly, "though you're very kind. But it is quite a d'y for me—you see I'm starting out on me own like to-d'y, leavin' me dad, who's takin' a new missus; so 'e does n't need me or little Hal, me brother, y'

know. I've just been about a room in Jubilee Court and I'm moving there to-d'y."

"That's the talk," Dandy said, bending his face to a level with hers; "that's the w'y! Now there'll be no more nonsense, I 'ope, such as '*me dad would n't hear of it.*' Can you give any reason, I ask, for not walkin' out along of me *now*, Victoria Alexandra?"

Pippin laughed. Dandy was such a wit she always laughed at him; he did everything in a humorous way, from so swiftly conducting the ardent courtship she had at first tried to discourage, to calling her by her dear names, Victoria Alexandra.

"No, Dandy," she admitted thoughtfully, "they's nothink to stop our walkin' out now."

She looked into his eyes. There was a happy light in them.

"That's better," he smiled back; "it's su'think like to 'ear you talk sense. I came out to-d'y, as I've said, to look yer up, old gal. I says to meself when I snapped on this 'ere cravat," he tapped the tie and Pippin's glance was attracted by its delicate shade, matching perfectly the tender blue of Dandy's eye, "I says it's the last time, Dandy, old cove, you're to ask the little woman — if she says no again, it'll be because she fancies another —"

"It's not so," Pippin cried out sharply; "it's been Dad needin' me!"

"Awright then," drawled Dandy.

A smile rippled over his face.

"Are we engiged, dear?"

Pippin looked down at the even row of buttons on her bodice.

"If you like, old chap." Then she added with affected flippancy, "Anythink for a quiet life." But she ran her forefinger up and down the row of buttons, the blush deepening and paling upon her cheek.

"An' when will you name the d'y, Victoria Alexandra?"

"Oh, that 'll be a good w'y off," she said.

Fully resuming her coquetry, she again banged his chest. "Now 'ave a bit o' patience, old cove, can't yer? There's lots of reason for waitin'," she hurried on; "I've got to get used to bein' by myself. I've got to get a situation —"

"There y' are," Dandy put in. "Without a father now — well, 'ow yer going to p'y the rent!"

"In course," she murmured, momentarily assuming the attitude of a dependent daughter. "*Now* I'll need to shift for meself, but," she added suddenly, "I can do it! I wants to. I've several things in mind!"

He looked admiringly at her.

"Awright, old gal! Then we'll do a bit o' courtin' till yer gets sick o' work and wants a cove to lift the burden, as 'e 'll be waitin' to do!"

"Till then —" an upward glance eloquently finished her sentiment.

He pressed her arm and returned her look. Then he drew her along with him.

"'Ow about 'ouse'old furnishings?" he thoughtfully inquired.

Pippin gaped at her lover's intuitive powers.

"I'm not furnishing, old chap. The room's complete," she said, "and as comfy—!"

There was an odd, suddenly yearning look in her eyes.

"What is it, then?" Dandy asked, bending to read her face and receiving the loud-voiced approval of a passing cabby. "There's su'think you'd like; it's plain in your eye."

Pippin felt that she was very weak this morning. The room, the charm of the quiet genteel little court was upon her.

"Every window's got an ornament in it, in the Court, every one but me. Opposite mine is a cage of love-birds."

"What would you like in yours, dear?" he urged. "A canary — named Teddy?"

"I'd love a canary," she admitted it softly.

"Ah," he said, "in the Brompton Road."

He hurried her along and she clung to his arm, her face lifted to his and a flush of joy tinting her cheeks.

"There's the little nipper —" she began.

"Rather," agreed Dandy. "We'll start out with a bit of a family, when we do get off, what? To think I've never seen 'im, too!"

"'E's waitin' now five minutes' walk from 'ere in a dairy," Pippin said, hurrying forward.

Suddenly from a doorway shot the purple velvet creature.

"Go blimy!" she exclaimed, facing them, "if it ain't little Pippin!"

"Doll!" Pippin said.

"My word," shrilled Doll, "am I a ghost or what, to give yer such a turn? You've gone like chalk, Pip!"

She broke into a high giggle.

"Thort you was copped, eh?"

She seemed unable to subdue her laughter. Bending nearly double in mirth, the purple feathers of her hat swept the pavement, her bun of hair became loosened and trailed down her back.

"'Ere," she shrilled, sobering, as Pippin leading Dandy moved cautiously round her; "introduce your bloke."

"Mr. Daniels," Pippin said, "this is Mrs. Thoms."

Dandy stared.

"Know my 'Arry?" grinned Doll.

"'E does not!" Pippin replied for her young man; "an' if you don't mind, we'll be going along about an errand we're on."

"If it's so pressing!" replied Doll, her merriment gone.

"S'long, Doll!" came tremulously from Pippin and still clinging to Dandy, she drew him away.

Doll's jeering laughter followed them.

"Pore thing," Dandy said. "I've noticed 'er before to-d'y. She looks a bad lot!"

His glance at Pippin was questioning.

"Noticed 'er?" cried Pippin sharply.

"Noticed 'er 'anging about!" he said. "You know 'er, then?"

Pippin drew her arm from his. The joy had gone, anxiety shone in her face.

"Not well. In fact 'ardly at all. I don't like 'er!"

"Come, come!" cheered her lover, seeing her discomfort. "It's nothink you can 'elp and there's another thing I've not told you, dear. Besides being a 'oliday, it's likewise the anniversary of me birth — twenty-one years!"

"Twenty-one years! Why, you're of age, old chap!" cried Pippin. She looked up into his face proudly.

"Twenty-one years an orphan, too," he said. "To-day I mean to be unusual; a rare 'un! What about a bus to Kew, then a boat up the old river and after that tea in the garden? Ask the little chap, and see!"

Little Hal having leisurely finished his bun and

glass of milk at the dairy, got down from his stool at Pippin's introduction and gave his hand to her young man with engaging friendliness.

"Now, little 'un," began Dandy at once, "it's for you to s'y whether we're off on a 'oliday or not! First, we've a bird to buy and christen, then we thort of going on a bus to Kew!"

"Pippin!" Little Hal turned to his sister. "Really, oh, really?"

"It's for you to s'y," insisted Pippin's young man.

"Me to s'y?" whispered the boy. "Yes — oh, yes. I want to go ever so!"

"Bless 'is little 'eart!" murmured the dairy-keeper as Dandy settled with her for his young friend's refreshment.

They emerged from the shop, a gay trio. Dandy, carrying the bundle and holding a little hand clasped in his, was the recipient of a steady, upward, adoring gaze from Hal. Pippin held his other hand and they walked toward Brompton Road. In Brompton Road was a bird fancier's. Here they entered, to be received attentively by a bearded gentleman.

"Now then!" demanded Dandy, putting down the bundle; "show us su'think up to date in canaries!"

The bearded one then went to the back of the shop and returned with a sweet little fluff of yel-

low in a gilt cage, price ten shillings and sixpence.

"Sings like a nightingale," he stated. "Sings like a nightingale, an' this neat little cage—"

"Never you mind about the cage," commanded Pippin.

She turned upon Dandy who was already counting out his money.

"You can't go lavishin' it about like that, old cockalorum, now do stop to think!"

Dandy jingled the money in his pocket.

"I've me whole month's screw, dear," he whispered, "and you're wanting a suitable bird while you're about it, I fancy."

And instead of stopping to think, he went looking all about the shop at the clerk's bidding, for anything he liked better, still jingling his money. All unconsciously he was revealing to Pippin how much he needed her. He must be continually in the way of temptation; the talkative clerk's sort was plentiful. A sense of protective possession swelled her little bosom, but quickly followed the thought of her unworthiness. How could he become hers to save from others while her first duty lay in shielding him from herself, her past and such contaminating acquaintances as Doll.

She summed the matter up with the vow, "Not till I'm str'ight, a square 'un!"

She must have been employed, have lived in a

good street. She must have walked out with Dandy properly engaged and possessing a little money of her own. She had a strong sense of comradeship and desired to stand her lover treat as well as to stand treated. Marriage to her, and she had reasoned it out, was not a woman's means of support; *her* old man should be her pal and they would share alike.

Followed by the grinning clerk and little Hal, Dandy came from the back of the shop carrying a bird in a modest cage in place of the fluff of yellow that sang like a nightingale. With one hand to his heart, bowing before her, he extended the gift gallantly.

"'E's yours, Victoria Alexandra, christened by me and little Hal — Teddy! 'E did n't cost too 'igh an' he's got some good notes this man assures us, eh, sir?"

"Also I've let it go very reasonable," said the clerk, "and I believe it's to be sent?"

Pippin gave her name and the new address with an important jerk of head that nearly dislodged her fur cap.

"Thank you!" beamed the clerk.

"And," added Pippin, "you might 'ave the kindness to deliver this bundle along o' the bird." She indicated the roll containing her entire worldly possessions. "I'm not going str'ight off 'ome!"

They hailed a bus and hoisting little Hal to his

shoulder Dandy mounted to the top after Pippin. Here with a rakish exchange of hats they began the outing. Now and then the sallow face of Doll framed by untidy hair came across Pippin's vision, but quickly passed and left her happy, confident of her future and Dandy.

They reached Kew and feasted on ices and seed cake. Then they went on the river. It was Hal's first time in a boat. His joy was also their pleasure. The wonder in his eyes, the flush in his pale, weary face, the gentleness of manner that took the place of his old peevishness were marked by Pippin. His affection for Dandy increased her own admiration for her lover.

It was yet early in the evening when Dandy brought them back to the little court. He viewed with approval the house and the window of the room that was now Pippin's.

"It's got tone, this neighborhood 'as," he agreed, "an' I like your being 'ere, dear!"

He pressed her hand warmly and at last loped away and left her as she had hardly dared hope to be, a resident of Jubilee Court.

CHAPTER IV



MISS LAWRENCE sat beside the window in her room in Mrs. Penley's lodging-house in Bloomsbury Square. The letter that lay half open in her lap she had read before, but now she went over it again.

Dearest Girl:

You have run away from me. Honestly that is all I can think of; you have put three thousand miles of salt water between us, to say nothing of the land-distance Goshen is from New York, where I should have to go before I could begin the voyage to England. You see what I mean, don't you? If you want me, dear little child, send for me—I will come. I was expecting *you* when I got your letter that you had sailed. Oh, Molly! Well I wish Leonora Lawrence success on the stage, since that is her heart's desire—I wish it in spite of the knock it must give my happiness. I see now how selfish I have seemed in wanting you so that I have driven you away. Forgive me. If my arms stretch out across the sea yearningly to little Molly, my admiration goes out to you, courageous Miss Leonora Lawrence.

Yours always,

CHARLIE.

She finished and raised her eyes to the familiar letter-head. In one corner "Pumps" flared in red print, in the other "Charles Browne, Manager," below and nearer the center, "Goshen, Indiana." Her look drifted away over the little back garden. From the tiny black chimneys smoke was beginning to rise in a softly purple pall through which the sun would soon burst in hot splendor to begin the day. She drew back from the window and sitting down by a table took up a letter she had begun.

"Dear Charlie," she had written. After a moment she went on.

You have probably bought the papers to read of my fame, and so discovered what a fizzle "The Tenderfoot" has made here. It ran only a week! If I were a manager, I'd have known it would fail. Why, just the little while I've been here, I can see what the British Public wants. It likes American things, but it doesn't like just *anything* simply for being American. I believe that some day I can write a play the British Public will like—some summer when I'm resting on my laurels of the season before. I thank you for your good wishes, Charlie boy, but I'm not coming back for a while. I ran away from not just *you*, but you in league with everybody at home to keep me from my art. I ran away from obstacles, do you see? I am looking for an engagement here now; it is good for me. London is not a bit like New York. I'm learning lots of things,

among others not to talk through my nose; the British public hates our talking through the nose.

Little Goshen must be very pretty and green now; how are pumps? I will write again, but probably I shall not write too often.

L. L

The letter finished, she went back to the window. The sun was out; high and hot it began to shine over the housetops.

"Another day!" she said, rising and nodding. "Well, I'm glad I have thought out a plan for temporary help and I *know* I shall get an engagement soon!"

Leonora had paced the floor nearly all night, thinking, thinking! Her money was entirely gone. She owed three weeks' lodging, and Mrs. Penley, the landlady, had said that something must be done, and at once.

She took up her letter, addressed it to Mr. Charles Browne, Goshen, Indiana, and dropped it into her hand-bag. From a drawer of her bureau she took a small gold cross and chain and a ring. She examined them critically, then they too went into the bag. Pausing for a moment, she stood in contemplation of a photograph upon the corner of her bureau. A little tender smile lifted the corners of her mouth and she murmured,

"Goshen could n't hold you, dear old Charlie, if you knew what a pickle I am in!"

She laughed a little. She began slowly doing her hair. Then she viewed the clothes in her closet and chose a ruffled frock of pink crêpe, a pink straw hat and a pink parasol.

When she had dressed leisurely, she sat down at the window.

"I wonder what time pawnshops open?" she said presently.

As though seeking admittance to answer, some one knocked at her door.

"Come in," said Leonora.

It was Mrs. Penley, her landlady.

"I thought I heard you," she said. "What have you decided to do, Miss Lawrence?"

She entered and closed the door, then advanced to the center of the room, adjusting the beribboned widow's cap she wore upon her elaborate coiffure. Her eyes wandered to the bed.

"Why, have n't you been to bed? Fancy!"

Miss Lawrence returned her searching gaze, smiled cheerily and shook her head.

"No!" she said. "I've been thinking; almost all night I've been thinking. I can raise some money. I'm going out to do it now. Perhaps I can't get enough to pay all I owe you, but I can give you part of it. Then, of course, before very much longer I'll have an engagement. Even if it should n't be just what I want, I'd take it for a while."

"Now that won't do, my dear." Mrs. Penley frowned in annoyance and rested her clasped hands upon the shiny buckle of her wide satin girdle. "It is n't certain enough. You must write home to some of your people, you must indeed, or I can't keep you on. I have a guest now who would take this room."

"Then I must go," Miss Lawrence said, turning quickly.

"Why not write home?" frowned her landlady.

The answer was cold and decided. "I came to London independently. I do not wish to ask my relatives for money. I'll pack at once."

"Unless you pay me in full, you must leave your box here, though I hate to be 'arsh." Mrs. Penley's voice softened a little.

"You're not harsh." Leonora smiled at her bravely. "It's business. You've been awfully good and patient. I'll do the best I can to settle with you; my gold cross is n't very heavy, and the diamond in my ring is small."

Mrs. Penley raised her hands in protest.

"You're going to pledge —"

"Me jools!" Miss Lawrence laughed lightly.

Mrs. Penley backed away until she bumped into the door. "I do not see that it is a light matter, Miss Lawrence! You Americans are *never* serious, now, *are* you?"

"It's awfully tough luck, Mrs. Penley," Leonora said then, very seriously, "but while I did not expect to stay and get into debtors' prison over here, as I seem about to do, I did not expect to find several leading parts immediately offered me either, so I'm not disappointed."

She took the photograph from the bureau and after a moment of indecision, thrust it into her hand-bag.

"I'm not a bit discouraged," she announced. "I've never yet heard of any real great emotional actress, who did not go through hard luck, have you? It's the making of them."

Mrs. Penley rattled the knob to show her distaste of the subject; also that she was going.

"It'll do me good," Leonora added with sharp emphasis. "It will bring me out. They say misfortune *does*, and I *know* I've got something in me."

She pressed her slim hands to her breast and turned a face of glowing courage to the retreating form. There came back to her the plaintive words:

"I must say I hope you'll pay me."

"Please trust me, Mrs. Penley!" Leonora threw earnestly after her creditor.

She ran to the door to make sure of being heard. On the landing huddled the housemaid. Her heavy face was full of sympathy and fear for this young

lady whom she liked. Leonora went back to her trunk, searching among the trinkets in the top tray and, seizing upon a turquoise-studded back comb, rushed out and forced it into the hardened little hands.

"With Miss Lawrence's best wishes, Phœbe," she whispered.

"Oh, miss, must you go out in the streets? I'd do anything for you!" Leonora pressed the girl's hands and turned away. Just now she feared sympathy.

She quickly packed her belongings, locked the trunk and snatching up parasol and gloves thrust her arm through the handle of her bag, and hurried from the room. As she opened the vestibule door, Mrs. Penley came out of her sitting-room.

"There's the Y. W. C. A. you can go to, Miss Lawrence," she said kindly, "and do arrange to settle with me soon; I've been very unbusinesslike with you."

"You'll never be sorry!" Miss Lawrence called earnestly. "I will bring you back something to-day, whatever I can manage."

She crossed the road and stopped, looking over the iron paling into the shady square. She felt suddenly faint. She remembered then that except for a cup of tea and a biscuit she had eaten nothing at all the day before.

"I can't go in and rest," she said weakly, "for

now I'm only Mrs. Penley's ex-lodger, and I have no gate key."

She slowly moved on. It was very warm and the faintness did not go away. She could not remember to have seen any loan-shops nearer than those in the Strand, so she followed Southampton Row to Bow Street and thence to a little shop the windows of which sometimes displayed old jewels. But, reaching the place, the sight of it quite suddenly and unaccountably sickened her. To enter and barter away her gold cross and ring! It seemed sacrilege. For the moment, she could not go in. A little farther down, just off the Strand, were Temple Gardens; she could go there and recover her courage. Then she would return.

All along the busy Strand quick-lunch places exhibited placarded invitations to hurried American tourists. The small shops displayed umbrellas, gloves, handkerchiefs and silk hosiery, doubtless especially attractive, to Americans. Buzzing like bees in clover, dipping from one shop into another, they met and compared loudly, humorously their purchases. It was a gaily commercial crowd. Pretty women joyful at seeing and being seen passed, with Baedekers under their arms. From tally-hos, taxis and motors they gazed with devouring eager eyes upon the city. None of them were in Leonora's plight. But her head raised quickly at the thought. She would have changed

places with none of them. Everything she suffered now would tell in future. When her Opportunity came she would have lived. She welcomed her suffering. She asked only that no one need suffer with her. Then she thought of Charlie Browne back home in Goshen. Still *he* loved not only her, but making money as well. He was getting rich. He would forget her. Suddenly Leonora felt that she did not want him to forget her. He might remember her as a friend, as something dear he had sacrificed upon the Altar of Art. This would, she reflected, develop the fineness in him. It would inspire her. She turned into Temple Gardens and stumbling to a seat, dropped weakly down, her strength suddenly giving out.

"When the clock strikes again," she murmured, "I'll go back. I've got to. I've promised Mrs. Penley. Besides I've got to eat. I'm—I'm *hungry!*"

CHAPTER V

“ *YOU'LL get put out of the Court!*” It was a tormenting little voice thumping away within Pippin's weary body.

Two days she had spent in ardent search of employment, something that would permit her to sleep at home, for she loved the domestic privacy of her own room. She had got into the Court by a misrepresentation. She hoped to efface the profane memory of this, remove all necessity for further misdealing by proving her *own* character. This could only be achieved by prompt payment on rent days.

She must have employment then, sufficiently remunerative to pay her rent, and Hal's moderate expense in the country where he had gone with Mrs. Crimmins's Sally, and also to supply herself with a holiday outfit and a little spending-money. Pippin scorned the drudgery of slavey or scullery-maid; she desired something that would not take away dignity or freedom, something akin to Dandy's position of responsibility, of which he told her a good deal. To all suitable newspaper advertise-

ments she had responded diligently, and now she hurried through a fashionable part in which a resident desired a "second help to sleep out," having stated the fact in the morning *Telegraph*.

This had seemed acceptable as a beginning. She had come to the place hopefully, only to be turned sorrowfully away.

"Makin' up yer mind to go str'ight's not all there is to it," she bitterly reflected. "'Ave you got a character, gal! Where was you last employed?" she mimicked. "You can't expect to be engaged without a character now, can yer!"

She laughed; it was an ugly little sneer. But she had tried hard. Forces too strong to withstand seemed beating her back to old habits. It might be easiest to give up! With her weakness came a faintly insidious craving. She looked about. But this was not a neighborhood for "pubs"! She walked on. If she did take a drop, especially a drop too much, and went back to Jubilee Court — it would be the end.

She turned and shook a fist at the house that had rejected her services. Savage resentment burned within her. She yearned to be honest — how she longed for it!

She counted off the places she had applied for. Fifteen in two days. She looked down at her boot that had given way from the hard wear of her long walks. The possible openings had been, it seemed,

at the four corners of London. She began to sing, rakishly.

"I likes society, real society, 'igh society."

She kept along without definite purpose, but drifted surely toward old haunts. She would not indulge the craving, but a few minutes among the shoppers might be amusingly and profitably spent. Pippin knew about pockets; getting at what they contained was a talent. She had that talent. Yes! She excelled Doll who had taught her, and Doll's Harry, and Kitty! Kitty was Harry's sister; all of them were in "the profession."

Harry ran big risks, robbing houses and shops and had to lie low for days and weeks, sometimes. Doll was lazy, besides a bad heart that fluttered, and Kitty seldom exerted herself because of overfondness for gin. They had been proud of Pippin.

She finally came into the Strand, where she slackened her gait. It was a very warm day and after her efforts for honest employment, she was tired. At Temple Gardens she turned in. She would wait a while and rest.

A few people were walking about, but a slim form in a fluff of pink, sitting upon a bench, at once caught her eye. Pippin loved pink. She could not see the face that was shaded beneath the drooping rose-laden hat. She made a slow détour

and brought up at the side of the occupant of the seat. There she dropped on to the bench.

The lady in pink turned and looked. Then she bent her cheek to her hand again. The back of her head with its coils of fair hair was toward Pippin, while her face was half hidden. Pippin's black eyes narrowed as they traveled nearsightedly, but with admiration from the hair on down to the soft stuff of the pink bodice; she noted a tiny button that had missed its loop, and she counted the flounces from the waist, down to the shiny patent-leather toe. The lady's gloved hand was thrust languidly outward upon the seat and from it trailed a hand-bag on a silken cord.

Pippin darted a quick look around. Covering the bag with a corner of her own frock, her hand groped and, slipping the catch of the bag, told as well as her eyes could have done what it contained; letters, a photograph, toilet necessities, keys; a cross and chain and a ring, but no money. Pippin transferred the jewelry to her own pocket and closed the bag. Obviously the pretty person in pink was without money; it was possibly the reason for her silent dejection.

After a few moments of waiting, Pippin gave a loud yawn. The lady started. She rose, swayed forward, rested upon her parasol. Then with a quick hard breath of resolution, she walked away. Her young neighbor of the bench rose also and fol-

lowed slowly. She was such a pretty young woman and Pippin wished to see where she went.

As she had promised herself, Leonora returned to the pawnshop. She decided to save delay and have the things in her hand as she entered, so she stopped before the window, opened the bag and slipped her hand in. Fumbling for a moment, she peered into it closely; she drew out the letter and photograph, and looked again. The cross and chain and ring were gone! She pressed forward against the window-pane, gripping her parasol for support, striving not to fall in the blackness that suddenly enveloped her.

A hand closed on her arm, an arm slipped round her, strong and supporting. She leaned upon it and opened her eyes. It was the little girl in the fur cap, who had sat beside her on the bench in Temple Gardens. She closed her eyes again!

“Buck up, Miss!”

She felt herself led forward. The guiding hand was kind, the cheery voice friendly, urging her to each step. She found herself in a bus; she felt it moving with a cumbersome, jolting motion. There was a soft dabbing and fanning of a handkerchief upon her forehead; it soothed her and kept her dimly conscious. The jolting continued with frequent short stops and a man's voice calling the streets.

Then she was urged again by a kindly voice to "buck up," to "take it easy." She tried bravely. She groped through, out of the omnibus, walked a few steps, climbed some stairs, entered a doorway and knew no more.

Leonora opened her eyes under the weight of a cool wet towel. She pushed the towel away. There was a blur of pink walls, and then appeared a short figure, and a hat — with roses — a big pink hat! It was her own hat, Leonora finally made out, on the head of the girl, who had helped her. The girl stood before a small mirror topping a chest of drawers in the corner, looking at herself. She finally took the hat off carefully, and turned away from the glass.

"It needs golden 'air!" she admitted regretfully.

Her dejection in the matter caused the lady on the bed to laugh weakly.

"Oh, Miss!" gasped Pippin.

She bobbed across the room out of view, a clattering of dishes followed and quickly the welcome aroma of tea close at hand came to Leonora. Her trembling hand reached for the cup.

The girl held it while Leonora sipped gratefully. "A bit o' bread too," suggested Pippin. Leonora ate the "bit" and lay back refreshed.

"You're awfully good," she murmured.

Her hostess did not reply at once.

"Bit o' luck," she said, turning round to gaze at

the walls, "me getting this pretty room. Ain't the pink paper fresh and sweet, Miss; I fancy it no end myself!"

"I love pink, too," said Leonora.

"It suits you with your golden 'air." Pippin looked around at the "'air," but meeting the eyes of her guest turned away again shyly.

She went to the bird-cage hanging in the window and poked a finger between the bars. Her manner was not that of one given to shyness. It seemed a temporary embarrassment.

"I'm all right now," Leonora said, sitting up, "and I can be going."

"Going 'ome, Miss?" Pippin asked, though she felt certain the lady somehow had no home, just now.

Leonora herself counted all the pink ruffles of her skirt and reaching the bottom and discovering that her shoes had been removed wiggled her stockinged toes thoughtfully.

"No," she said, "I have n't any home."

"Don't worrit, Miss," urged her hostess. "Stop the night 'ere; stop till you finds yerself. It's odd me feelin' so keen about 'aving this neat room; I've just moved in, y' know."

"Then you live alone," Miss Lawrence said.

"Oh, yes, *quite!*" came the answer. "Me name is — well, I'm called Pippin because of these," she touched at each hard red cheek, "but I was chris-

tened for Their Majesties — Victoria Alexandra, proper!"

"I like Pippin," smiled the guest; "it goes with your lovely complexion."

Pippin grinned and wiped a careless hand across the asset, thereby proving that it was not removable.

"You ain't London," she said.

"Goshen, Indiana, U. S. A.!"

Pippin smiled. The American accent always amused her.

"I knew you came from the States," she said. "I can always tell 'em."

"My name is Lawrence; Miss Leonora Lawrence!"

This intelligence brought a broader smile and a soft sigh of satisfaction.

"I am an actress!"

A little gasping whisper, "Oh, Miss, I s'y, not reely?"

Pippin stood in a transport of joy before the celebrity she had harbored unawares.

"An actress, Miss; 'ow wonderful for me!"

The actress, oblivious of the awe she inspired, tied her shoe and observing her bag hanging upon a chair-back rose and went to it and with the look of one who still cannot believe what is perfectly known, opened it, looked expectantly into it, then exclaimed; peered closer, slipped her hand in and

drew out the cross and chain and ring. She stood staring, holding them out to her little friend.

"Ho, there you are then, Miss," Pippin said brightening hopefully. "You can *put in* things o' that sort and get a bit'o' money; you 'ad n't thought of it, 'ad you?"

"Why, I was going to pawn them and then I looked and they were gone—"

"You came over ill, Miss," reminded Pippin; "they could n't 'a' been gone! You did n't see them is the w'y of it. I've been took that bad of a sudden—"

Words ceased to flow although the agile movement of jaw continued; her eyes became round, black, sharp with sudden fear as she stared into the calm gaze that fixed her.

"You sat beside me in Temple Gardens," Leonora said.

"An' saw 'ow ill you was," added Pippin sympathetically. "You could stop the night, Miss—I'd do anythink to make you comfortable. I've a nightie to lend yer—after all you've *got* to stop some plice, 'ave n't you, and the room is 'ere an' welcome."

"Do you work?" Leonora asked.

"Profession of lady's maid." The reply came breathlessly prompt. "I'm off on a bit of a furlough."

Leonora restrained angrily rebuking this fluency.

There was something pitiable about it. But her resentment was keen. She had been the victim of this girl who clearly was — a thief! Distaste, then fear, crept over Leonora.

She turned quickly to the window, demanding:

“What street is this, please?”

“Jubilee Court, Miss; old Chelsea, S. W.”

Pippin understood her position exactly. She crept with her cat-like stride nearer her visitor. Her look and tone were pathetic, supplicating.

“We all ’ave our bit o’ trouble one time or another; it *do* drive to desperation too.” Then turning away, she whispered, “I ’d broke off from what I used to do — d’ yer see, Miss Lawrence? But then I *could n’t* get a berth with all I tried *ever* so!” She wrung her hands before the silent and outraged lady.

“Anybody could slip up, and not mean to — could n’t they?” she pleaded; “once, like? Then ’ate they ’d done it and never would again — what, Miss? Oh,” she burst out, “I ’ve got to be trusted like, can’t yer understand?”

• Leonora stood watching her, thinking.

Pippin thought too, shrewdly. Only *clean* money paid a lady’s room rent.

“Stop along o’ me, Miss,” she still invited. “The rent is paid from a bit o’ extra charing I got, lucky like!” The lie stung her a little. She cried out: “Give us a chanct! The caretaker,

Mrs. Crimmins, does n't know me; I've little more 'n just come, I *wants* to stay and with you 'ere —!"

Something looked from Pippin's eyes, perhaps the spirit of the girl she wanted to be — and Leonora surely saw the better self. Her offer was friendship that would atone for her crime. And the admission that a trusting presence would aid her spiritually and materially. Then too, she need n't have put back the jewels in the bag — and when she had them she could have deserted her victim there in the street. Yet for a moment longer, Leonora wavered. But where could she go? And if her staying helped Pippin — if they could help each other!

"I will stay!" she said resolutely.

For a long time the two looked into each other's eyes.

"I will trust you," she promised.

A little moan of joy escaped Pippin.

"I am in a difficulty," Miss Lawrence after a moment confided solemnly. "It is only temporary. In the profession," she spoke it proudly, "there are many ups and downs, but nearly all really great actresses have had their hardships and I expect to bear mine. They will help me to my goal!"

"Do they, Miss?" eagerly asked Pippin.

"You see," Leonora explained, "there are many

drawbacks for an American actress in London, the first being an American accent. Now my accent is pronounced."

"Yes, Miss," agreed Pippin, "it is that!"

"Mercy! even you —"

"Well, Miss, I knows the accent, you see. I've been a good bit about the West End and parts Americans haunts and I know 'em!" Suddenly she stopped.

Miss Lawrence thought she understood, but she said simply:

"Perhaps you can help *me*, Pippin, to overcome my difficulty."

"'Elp yer, oh, Miss, I'd do anythink for you! I'll tip you off every d'y about the American talk — though I must s'y I loves it. It does make me larf, it's quite comic enough for the theater!"

Miss Lawrence forgot her reserve for the moment in amusement. She laughed.

"What *must* it seem to Toby Hamilton?"

"Toby 'Amilton?" questioned Pippin.

"Toby Hamilton," repeated Miss Lawrence reverently; "monarch of all he surveys."

"A king, like," murmured Pippin, with a glance at her monarch hanging over the mantel beside his queen.

"Yes," smiled the lady, musing; "Mr. Hamilton is quite kinglike. In his monarchy are leading ladies, leading playwrights — nothing but leading

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things!" She was apparently started on her favorite subject and addressed herself to the portrait of King Edward. "He can scent out a promising playwright — oh, miles off. He ferrets out ability in a girl that even she herself is not aware of having! By a word or a look from him, she becomes a leading-something, according to her temperament which he always understands! He *likes* the American temperament, but our accent! He raves and tears his hair over the American accent!"

"I'd keep aw'y from 'im, Miss!" advised Pippin.

"Away from him! I've never even seen him! I'd give five, well — one year of my life for a real interview, a heart-to-heart talk with him. I've written, he does n't answer. He could place me on the road to Fame, to-morrow!"

"My word!" Pippin remarked.

Miss Lawrence turned toward the canary's cage and stood watching Teddy thoughtfully.

"I wonder if I have been too sure of myself," she mused, a new view of things slowly taking shape in her mind. "I should not have held out for leading parts. Why did n't I take a small part? I could have had that. Now I shall have to take anything and lucky to get it. I will borrow what money I can on my jewelry," she added. "Is there any place near?"

PIPPIN  
BY  
THE  
AUTHOR  
OF  
THE  
LITTLE  
LADY

"Solomon's," Pippin said quickly. "Shall I 'ave it round to 'im?"

Miss Lawrence looked hard at her, then took the articles from her bag and wrapped them in a handkerchief.

"I'm back in two twos!" Pippin promised meaningly.

"If there's anything needed for our supper," added the young lady, feeling suddenly the very normal pangs of hunger and looking round, "please buy it out of what you get!"

Striking at her cap Pippin departed.

## CHAPTER VI



EONORA looked round the room curiously. It was of good size, the ceiling low and slanting. Between it and the walls the little windows that were so wedged in they seemed cheated of their rights, opened outward upon hinges. Along the narrow casements a bright green window-box fitted, filled with blossoming geraniums and a profusion of trailing green. She leaned out, looking down into the prim little court. The residents she judged middle-class working people, but of peace and cleanliness they might boast. Some children played in the narrow cement space between the pavements for almost no traffic came down Jubilee Court. From the King's Road sounded the rumble of omnibuses, the snort of motor-buses. She could catch a glimpse of them passing at the corner, yet how secluded the little street seemed. Looking the other way she saw the private square and houses with their green doors and heavy knockers, and felt suddenly glad of this temporary haven. Of course something better would soon turn up. Meantime she drew a

long breath of relief, at the prospect of light rent and simple economy. And adventure still thrilled her, excitingly contrasting with prosaic Goshen.

She turned back to the room. In the corner near the window stood a chest of drawers. A heart-shaped pincushion usefully ornamented the center. Each drawer had large glass handles. Above hung a small mirror. The bed was set against the wall. At its head there was a wardrobe freshly varnished. Three chairs, a center table with a plain white tea-set, odd cups, a wooden bread-plate, emptied but for crumbs and bread-knife upon it, was all of the real furnishings. The floor was bare except for a small square of carpet before the bed. The fireplace at the end of the room was used for cooking, the kettle swung from a crane. Leonora moved nearer the mantelshelf to view the ornaments. A jar for flowers stood at either end. Round the tops of them was alliteratively inscribed, "A Memento of Margate."

Beside the chimney, a cupboard was built, with shelves; coals and kindling — a nearly vanished supply — upon the lower one. On the next, cooking utensils and a penny package of tea.

Their Majesties the King and Queen of England hung in gilt frames over the mantelshelf. A picture of Lord Kitchener, cut from a newspaper, hung over the bed. His mustachios had been smeared with ink by some frivolous hand and this irrever-

ence remained undiscovered by the nearsighted Pippin and Mrs. Crimmins, who had never viewed the picture with glasses.

Leonora opened the door to a polite knock and stood confronted by a plump face set off by a coiffure of wondrous red.

"Ah," breathed the visitor with glowing satisfaction, gazing at Leonora. She brought her bouncing person into the room. "You *'ave* come! I'm Mrs. Crimmins, caretaker of the street," the woman went on. "Are you comfortable, do you think?"

"I think the little room is just dear," Leonora said honestly.

"Then *that's* awright," breathed Mrs. Crimmins with a smile. "Luggage comin' on?"

"Later," Leonora said.

"Later of course," Mrs. Crimmins answered with a satisfied glance at Leonora and turned her attention to the bed. "It's a good bed; the young person Raymond — your maid I mean — tells me she 'as sheets."

"The bed *looks* comfortable," Leonora murmured. "Won't you sit down, Mrs. Crimmins? Pippin," she suddenly recalled the name, "has gone out to — to market."

"That's the w'y," cheered Mrs. Crimmins, "an' I *am* glad you're pleased with everything. You'll send right down to me if they's a thing you want

after the young person goes out to-night, won't you?"

Leonora echoed. "Goes out to-night?"

"Out, yes, Miss, or is she sleeping 'ere to-night?"

"Oh," Leonora said firmly, "I shall have her stay with me."

"Of course, as you like."

Mrs. Crimmins rose from the chair she had taken.

"I'm 'appy now I met the young person's terms of four bob the week, instead of five and six for the room. I likes a lady about, even at cheaper rent."

"The price is satisfactory," said Leonora. She looked round her thoughtfully. "It seems about right."

"Then that's awright," Mrs. Crimmins beamed.

She raised her finger with the sudden trill of a flute across the street. "She p'ys reg'lar!" Mrs. Crimmins murmured, beating time.

Leonora sat down upon the bed, smoothing the ruffles of her frock. Pippin had *said* her rent was paid.

Mrs. Crimmins came nearer and likewise smoothing her frock and the clean apron over it, spoke with confession.

"When I let this room to the young person, I'd a feeling it was awright an' two minutes arterward, the money in me 'and too, I'd another feeling, it was n't. I thort she 'd deceived me."

"Oh, Pippin would n't do that," Leonora said quickly.

"Why, no, 'ere you *are!*"

She drew away a few paces and with critical yet approving stare inspected Miss Lawrence from head to foot. She wheeled suddenly and pointed at a wide shelf on the opposite wall.

"Nails and some thickish butter-muslin I've got a bit of, does it," she said.

"Does what?" inquired Leonora.

"Curtaings off a place there into a bedroom for your young person since she's to stop, and I've a box that'll mike 'er a bed. She's fortunite in her limbs, 'er coffin won't be a big expense to her! 'Ad her long?"

"No," answered Leonora.

"But no doubt she does for you right as rain," speculated Mrs. Crimmins.

Did for her! Leonora smiled. Certainly Pippin had done well for Leonora Lawrence.

"Now," said Mrs. Crimmins, "with that bit curtained off for a bedroom, which it'll also make a place to barth, the rest 'ere can be the droring-room like, what?"

"That will be very nice," nodded Leonora.

Mrs. Crimmins winked and nodded.

"Mystery's always been in this room," she said, "and mystery always will be. I like the feel of it round me, knowing it'll all come out right like,



when we gets four balls o' worsted for a penny, as the s'ying is!"

"Won't you sit down?" Leonora invited again, not knowing what to do with Mrs. Crimmins. She hurried to remove her chamois bag which lay open upon a chair; the contents slid to the floor, and the visitor, flesh notwithstanding, sprang forward, and while Leonora recovered her letters Mrs. Crimmins captured the photograph.

"Ah!" she cried, turning it over. "May I be so bold as to 'ave a look?"

Without waiting for a reply, she applied her apron to an imaginary covering of dust and stepping to the window viewed the picture closely; holding it off, she looked at Leonora.

"That gentleman," Leonora said finally, "is away over in America."

"I thought," Mrs. Crimmins remarked, "you was from America. It's the accent."

Leonora laughed. To Mrs. Crimmins the laugh seemed a little forced. Her inventive mind had quickly got at the reason for the pretty young lady's mysterious presence here in a secluded corner of London. It was a longish way to come, she reflected, but having discovered a man's villainy you could not go too far away. It was a mistake too, keeping their pictures.

"I'm quite certain, Miss," she began cheerfully, "no one's ever come 'ere but was a runaway from

su'think." After an impressive pause, she addressed the picture. "But we all get our just deserts good or bad. Our just deserts, that's my opinion! Tike your young person 'ere an' 'er brutal drunken father. 'E'll get 'is just deserts an' no one keener on seeing it 'appen than you are yourself, I'll wager, Miss!"

"Poor little Pippin!" thought Leonora, more tender, and glad to find excuse for her.

The dóor opened and Pippin, her hands full of bundles, burst in. She drew up sharply, darting a look from Mrs. Crimmins to the young lady.

"'Ere we are!" hailed Mrs. Crimmins. "'Ome from market."

Pippin sent an approving look toward Leonora.

"Yes, Mrs. Crimmins, I've been to market an' I've found some shrimps my lady'll go mad about!"

Catching Pippin's eye, Mrs. Crimmins nodded admiration of her lady.

Pippin signaled responsively, swelled with conscious pride and deposited her packages on the table, while the caretaker drew a dust-cloth from her belt and darting round the room flicked at everything, not without a resentful glance from Pippin whose habitual neatness could not be excelled.

"The soots *do* blow in," Mrs. Crimmins told Miss Lawrence, and having arrived at the chest upon which she had placed the photograph she

looked over her shoulder, her glance conveying belief that a lady found with that in her possession might be pardoned for any consequent rashness.

Suddenly she turned to Pippin.

"Tike them round you for example, young woman; let the men alone! Your mother 'ad your dad, I 'ad Crimmins — and," she looked again at the photograph, "they's 'ardly *any* exception to the rule. They spells trouble!" Mrs. Crimmins paused at the sound of a long, low whistle, stepped lightly to the window, looked and quickly drew in her head, a pleased simper dimpling her mouth.

"Till liter!" she murmured. "I am glad you 'ave come," and, bowing to Leonora, she swept from the room. Had Mrs. Crimmins's sentiments not been made known, her manner would have indicated that she went to a conquest.

"Pippin," Leonora whispered with a little humorous smile. "I have been expected. And you're my maid, too!"

A startled glance and then a low chuckle from Pippin.

"She was expectin' you, or some one," said Pippin, sobering again. "You may as well know, Miss, she's a bit balmy in the crumpet, being too keen on mysteries. She fancies 'em over everythink. You'll soon get on to 'er. But she's a good 'eart, I dare say."

The caretaker's visit had reassured Leonora.

And there was humor in what must have happened. Pippin having engaged the room for some highly commendable, but mythical person had secured Miss Leonora Lawrence to play the part.

Pippin reached into her pocket and produced two sovereigns, a half sovereign and some silver.

"'Ere it is, Miss, the very best I could manage out o' the foxy old cove — two quid, ten!"

Leonora gave a little gasp and fell back, grasping a chair.

"Two pounds and ten shillings! It won't begin to pay Mrs. Penley. I hoped for as much as five pounds."

"I could told you not, Miss. 'Ere's the ticket."

Leonora only stared at the money.

"Buck up, Miss," urged her new friend. "It's su'think to go on with; the rent's paid 'ere," Pippin hardly dared think how soon it would again be due though, "and you'll be 'avin' a bit o' luck soon."

This seemed to brighten Miss Lawrence.

"Yes," she said. "I shall surely get an engagement soon. I am willing to take small parts now."

She counted the odd silver and gave some to Pippin.

"This is for housekeeping, and I must send part of the rest as something upon a debt I owe — it will show I mean to pay."

Pippin, engrossed with her new responsibility,

dropped the silver into her pocket and began stowing her purchases into the cupboard. But with this new-found friend she was moved to talkativeness.

"Of course what one person does not all of 'em do, nor what a person does once, they'll not do all the time — eh, Miss?" She seemed in the throes of a mental struggle.

"Of course I don't want to lead a dog's life for twenty-odd year, but I *don't* believe Dandy's a second Crimmins, nor a — a," others were as well left unmentioned. "I'd like *you* to see Dandy, I would indeed. Can I tell you about 'im, Miss Lawrence, if you please?"

Leonora turned from the window. "What is it, Pippin? Tell me all about it." She sat down and Pippin took her seat on a low stool near.

"Dandy is me bloke. This is the w'y of it, I'd like you to know. It was a six mont's back — lor' love us what a night! an' I'd gone out to look for Dad, 'e being aw'y from 'ome without a top-coat or nothink when the rain come on. It's turned out since 'e was not far off, courtin' a 'andsome widow which 'e's goin' to wed — but at that time I did n't know. I fancied 'e'd stopped in at the World's End, a pub, Miss, 'e feels at 'ome in, to get a drop o' su'think warmin', knowing I'd come to look out for 'im."

A reminiscent smile stole over the little face.

"I dare s'y I'd passed from the top to the bot-

tom o' that street ten times an' with every time I'd turn to go back, there was Dandy at me 'eels. At last I larfed, quite 'earty and loud; 'is lovin' looks and he so dossed out in a fine checked rain-coat, I'd simply *got* to larf. Then what but a big gust o' wind comes that suddint an' sweeps away me cap,"—a wild wave of arms indicated the gale—"an' Dandy flies after it. Well, that was the beginning of me 'aving him for a bloke. It was me color 'e'd taken the fancy to, though for my part I like pale people. 'E made me go right off 'ome! I let 'im walk to the top o' me street—it was n't Jubilee Court then, Miss, an' I said I'd meet 'im next d'y. I did that too, but afterward I done what is called renouncin' of him."

"Why, Pippin?" Leonora urged. "Why did you — renounce him?"

"Oh, not that I did n't fancy 'im, Miss Lawrence,— fact, it was likin' Dandy ever so, made me do it. I saw 'ow with 'aving to keep Dad a gentleman as I'd promised Mar I'd do, I might 'ave ways different from Dandy, so grand and str'ight. I would n't 'ave 'im think I was n't as str'ight as 'im."

"Of course not," said Leonora quickly. "I don't blame you, Pippin. But do you know what?"

"What, Miss?"

"I should n't give him up at all. It's something to know a nice young man who is, as you say,

*straight.* I should be good friends with him, and do you know one thing I should n't allow?"

"What, Miss?" came again, faintly eager.

"I should *not* allow him to be any straighter than I would be myself — I mean, Pippin, I should keep Dandy for a —"

"Bloke?"

"Hero!"

"Oh, how simply sweet, Miss!" Pippin slid nearer. "Dandy makes a grand 'ero, I've read of 'em lookin' a lot as 'e does, an' I'm quite certain they's no noble thing 'e would n't do!"

"Well, there you are," nodded Leonora; "let Dandy be your hero. Of course when one has a hero, she would never do anything a hero would not like."

"'Ow beautiful!" Pippin sighed. "You see, Miss, after Dad took up with the widow an' *did n't* need me I got engiged! But with me—" she looked away painfully, "making that mistake to-day and then what Missus Crimmins said to-night about 'em all being bounders an' trouble —"

"Keep him, Pippin," Leonora urged earnestly; "you are wise in keeping Dandy for your friend and hero."

"Pal an' 'ero!" mused the girl. "I likes that, Miss. It's that I meant — what one person does, all of 'em don't do; nor what one person has done, they're not sure to keep on with."

"If the person sees that she has been wrong, she will surely want to change," gently agreed Leonora. She leaned forward, her hand on Pippin's arm.

Pippin's lips moved, a solemn light shone in her black eyes. "I 'm a-goin' to try for it, s' 'elp me Gawd."

And Leonora knew that it was meant.



## CHAPTER VII



IPPIN awoke very early next morning. Her first move was to open the butter-muslin curtains that partitioned her off and peer into the "drawing-room." Remembrance of the young lady she had left there last night seemed too sweet to be true. But looking, proved it a living, breathing reality; the lady was there fast asleep. "Beautiful angel!"

Pippin sighing let the curtains drop. She had slept as Mrs. Crimmins promised, "snug as a bug in a rug," in a box that was a tight fit. She sat up cautiously; giggling, she prodded the mattress, a muslin sack filled with excelsior — excelsior that had come wrapped round some new things for the bride below stairs — this extravagant young thing having put the stuff out into the hall for removal, it became the caretaker's.

"Wait till the lady's 'ad 'er second baby and see if she'll be so free," Mrs. Crimmins had warned while making the mattress.

Suddenly Pippin's peace of mind was assailed by the remembrance of Doll. She sharply regretted

now having settled so near her haunts. A horrifying vision of the creature waylaying Miss Lawrence came to her. She gripped the sides of her box. She decided quickly, the next time she met Doll, to take the bull by the horns: "I've turned honest, Doll," she would own, and end their acquaintance forever.

She drew up her knees and, head hunched between them, sat thinking. She had robbed Miss Lawrence the day before. Even if she had not reformed, she would never have chosen to harm Miss Lawrence. This proved that a wrong 'un never knows what they are doing. But how, having started in for being straight, had she, not intending, left it off? It showed how astonishingly strong the habit was. Now she must watch out for the other one. The yearning for the soothing "drop" must be guarded indeed! "Shockin'!" she whispered with a little shiver of fear.

She left her bed and from the hall drew in a shallow tin tub of water, to the place behind the curtains where, as quickly and silently as possible, she bathed.

She dressed, tiptoed to the little mirror, and took the pins from her ringlets. Finishing touches to the hair-dressing were under way when her eye fell upon the photograph of the American gentleman. The name "Charles Browne" was written on the back and beneath, "Goshen, Indiana."

Pippin read, then turning the photograph over, viewed it closely, coming to satisfactory conclusions as to the exact place the gentleman held in Miss Lawrence's regard.

"She'd 'ave 'im to be her bloke, if it was n't she's so took up with being a actress!"

She suddenly held the picture off, her gaze narrowed.

"A bit 'arsh-lookin'," she whispered. "I'd not like 'im to 'ave anythink on me. I'd rather be an actress meself than 'is missus, I would!"

From various angles her contemplation of the picture continued. Finally she replaced it. Next her attention fell to the contents of the top drawer, the drawer that Miss Lawrence had been prevailed upon to accept for her very own use. In frank curiosity began examination of what was there.

First it was an unsealed letter. Pippin had gone out after their tea the evening before to purchase writing material for Miss Lawrence. The envelope was addressed to Mrs. Emily Penley, Bloomsbury Square, London, W. C. The letter read:

*Dear Mrs. Penley,*

Enclosed is a postal order for ten shillings. It is less than I hoped to give you but I have been disappointed in the amount my poor little jewelry brought. I will make every effort to settle with you and I feel confident that I shall not long be unable to do so. You have been so kind that you may feel interested to

know I have found a friend who shares her comfortable quarters with me. Will you please take care of my trunk, my entire wardrobe is in it—I must admit that I need some of the things very much. Perhaps I may have some of them as soon as I can pay more, if not all, of what I owe you.

Yours very truly,

LEONORA LAWRENCE.

And the envelope was unsealed that the postal order might go in. Pippin reread the letter carefully, twice. Slowly her jaw dropped, little gasps of indignation escaped her.

“So that’s the w’y of it! A low old party in Bloomsbury a’-olding of Miss’s box an’ all her clothes!” Her muttering finally subsided. She stole a glance at the bed and returned the letter to the envelope. Then she set about getting breakfast. Miss Lawrence’s belongings in Bloomsbury Square she could not get out of her mind.

“What are you doing, Pippin?” came drowsily from the bed.

Pippin hurried to the bedside, insisting:

“You’re to stay a-bed, Miss, an’ ’ave breakfast!”

But she was conscious of her guest’s close scrutiny—a glance half fearful, that with waking, thought of yesterday might have brought. Then the young lady’s face cleared.

The banging of a pail and swish of scrubbing

brush was heard in the hall, a sudsy fragrance permeated the top floor, and even while panting with the exertion of her cleanly bent, Mrs. Crimmins began to sing.

"Now we'll 'ave a bit o' music," grinned Pippin and, reassured, began bustling about the room. A few moments later Miss Lawrence was breakfasting in luxury. A plain little board, that proved to be a movable shelf belonging to her cupboard, and wrapped in a clean cloth, Pippin had utilized as a tray. On this a cup of fragrant tea, a rack of toast, a boiled egg, and a neat dab of marmalade on a saucer.

"How delicious!" marveled Leonora gratefully.

"Thank you, Miss!" Pippin beamed gratification.

She stopped expectantly for the postman's rap sounded below and, still singing, the caretaker descended to answer. With astonishing agility she was back.

"Mail for Raymond!" she announced at the door.

Pippin bounded to admit her.

"Penny to collect on the letter," Mrs. Crimmins said. "I've paid it."

"The little kipper!" exclaimed Pippin, reaching into her pocket as she looked at the pencil-printed scrawl on the envelope. "'E sent it collect for 'e had no penny!"

She paid the penny, and opening her letter fell into gurgles of loving merriment.

"A cat, Missus Crimmins, dored by 'im, the love. I'd p'y most any price for it. It's 'is w'y of saying 'e remembers me, in spite of the good time he's 'aving in the country!"

She darted to the bed to exhibit the drawing to Miss Lawrence.

"Hal, me brother, Miss; the little chap, y' know!"

She hurried in the midst of Leonora's appreciation back to Mrs. Crimmins. But the caretaker stood outside in very serious reflection over her morning budget.

"Sally writes the boy is comin' on nicely and gets along so well with my two," she said, thrusting her letter into the bosom of her dress.

"'Ow nice!" smiled the sister.

Mrs. Crimmins reached out and closed Pippin's door with a suddenness that threatened her pert little nose. No doubt something in her mail had bothered her. Pippin wondered, but she had also received a postcard that engrossed her. Gilt letters upon one side said, "I think of you!" Upon the back was scrawled: "Lordship fretty. Does bird need seeds D."

Pippin read it over. Then more shyly, she took this card to the bedside.

"From 'im — me 'ero," she said softly.

Leonora observed the gilt-lettered message solemnly. Pippin turned it over.

"That's 'is hand," she pointed to the writing. "'E calls his master 'is lordship, which he regularly ain't at all. 'E's only Bertram Granville, Esquire; but Dandy s'ys 'e *ort* to be a lordship, he's so splendid. When he's fretty Dandy can't get off, you see, Miss!"

Miss Lawrence showed her quick comprehension of Dandy's cryptic message.

"He seems very business-like and thoughtful," she said.

Pippin turned eagerly to the canary which chirped in shrill rivalry of the love-birds in the opposite window.

"Teddy 'as n't a note," she said, "and I don't know what 'e cost! You see, Miss, Dandy's got a way o' lavishin' it about which is certain to be took advantage of as was done by that clerk in the bird-shop. I'm just as pleased little Teddy *don't* scream 'is lungs out. I only wished to ornament the window, but the beastie was supposed to sing and you don't want your young man's innocence and lavish w'y took advantage of!"

Miss Lawrence emphatically shook her head.

"'E give me the bird," Pippin said, "and *would* 'ave it he should keep it in seeds, they being, so 'e reasons, part of the bird. But blimy, I can't think of any sort of fowl could do with the feed Dandy

fancies this 'un can! 'E is a silly old kipper!" she added tenderly.

She relieved Miss Lawrence of the tray and suggested her morning toilet.

"I'll mike *your* barth ready be'ind the curtains, which when it ain't my bedroom, we 'd do as well to call the barthroom, I think. Then, Miss — then I should dress an' call round to see Toby 'Amilton!"

Leonora's sudden laughter rang out in the little room.

"Now what, Miss; is it about the barthroom?"

"It's your advice about Mr. Toby Hamilton," Leonora still laughed.

"After all," Pippin said, thoughtfully, "maybe it's part fancy about 'is bein' so great. If I wanted to see 'im —"

"Mr. Toby Hamilton *is* a great man, Pippin. Others beside Mr. Hamilton himself think so. I had even heard of him in America — before I came to London," Leonora said. "And to see him is one of my dearest desires!" The r's rolled from her tongue with Western generosity.

"My eye!" mused Pippin. "Now I'd simply drop in an' surprise 'im, Miss! And," she added, "you did s'y *dearest desire* quite American-like."

Leonora thanked her hostess very seriously for this reminder and retired to her bath.

Pippin took her new lady's pink frock from the wardrobe and painstakingly smoothed out each



flounce. Her mind dwelt upon the things detained at the Bloomsbury lodging-house. And when Miss Lawrence had put on her gown, Pippin took fastidious pains to fasten every button of the bodice, remembering the one that had been omitted and discovered by her yesterday in Temple Gardens.

"And to think I swiped from 'er, my beautiful Miss!"

The recollection brought its pang while her gaze admiringly beheld, now as then, the coils of fair hair, gleaming beneath the pretty pink hat.

"Oh, Miss," she gasped, viewing the young lady rapturously, "I wish you luck an' when Toby 'Amilton sees yer —!"

She was glad to have Miss Lawrence go out laughing and she leaned from her window to add:

"Please, Miss, you're not to be late 'ome for tea!" and getting a nod and a smile, she added pensively: "She needs lookin' arter, Miss Lawrence does. I fancy the gentleman on the chest *do* worry over 'er!"

Pippin's maternal instinct, so early and strongly developed, had been keenly roused at this evident need.

"I'll never lose sight of 'er, never give 'er up except when she's back in clover and not needing me!" she muttered.

That might be sometime hence. It might only be when Miss Lawrence finally married. She

smiled. Why not an earl for Miss Lawrence! Delighted at this Pippin saluted Mrs. Crimmins, now doing the steps and door-stone, who had paused to look, with open admiration after Miss Lawrence. She glanced up and winked. Indeed she approved of Pippin's lady.

Some residents of the Court were out to enjoy a street organ. By them the young stranger was closely observed. A leisurely butcher-boy on his way to the private square beyond, noticed her too.

"There's 'air!" he bellowed, his red face creased with grins. "There's 'air!"

Mrs. Crimmins lunged at the youth with her scrubbing brush. With butcher-boy agility, he leapt backward, and made the pavement opposite with the saucy inquiry, "'Ow'd your fice get the w'y it is?"

"Wait!" she said. "I'll be round at the butcher's before the d'y is out and then we'll see. Mr. Burns knows *me!*"

"Now we shan't be long," the butcher-boy jibed.

But Pippin turned away from the window. Arms folded across her bosom she took a few brisk turns around her room.

"Charin'," she complained, "is the only thing I knows of you can get without a character."

She hurriedly straightened the room, stuck on her fur cap and with a last look round, sailed out.

It was a warm day and Mrs. Crimmins was dallying over the door-stone this morning while thinking pleasantly of her new lodger.

"Did yer 'ear that boy?" she asked of Pippin.

"I saw you was enough for 'im," said Pippin, "or I 'd 'ave come down."

"A beautiful young woman," Mrs. Crimmins said. She looked toward the King's Road down which Miss Lawrence had disappeared. "Is 'er luggage like to come while you 're both out?"

Pippin gave a little start and affected an effort to recall some final instructions.

"What *was* 'er last words about that! I *am* a pore 'and at remembering."

"I should never a thort *that*," Mrs. Crimmins replied quickly and she added in a hurt voice, "*I'm* not one to pry into secrets. But I know when a lady is in trouble. Upset, with a man at the bottom of it, who would think of their luggage! Anythink I can lend Miss Lawrence she's welcome to. I've some *nice fine* underthings too." Mrs. Crimmins's red head, tightly bound in curling pins, tossed proudly.

"Mrs. Crimmins!" Pippin said with sidelong reproachful glance. "I know you would never pry into secrets!" Then she rewarded her modesty with: "Miss Lawrence is a n'actress!"

Mrs. Crimmins straightened up with every sign of interest.

Pippin went on.

"She 'as a number of things on hand, but is 'old-ing off to be sure of taking the right one. She could n't waste 'er time at su'think like — oh, s'y, that gal at the Empire, as dresses in men's clothes an' sings."

"Rather not! She's a lady, Miss Lawrence is," agreed Mrs. Crimmins.

The neighbors coming near again, she gave her lodger a quick sharp nudge and murmured, "We understands each other. Let me know if she needs anythink!"

Pippin turned for a word with the others and to notice the babies, inquiring the sex, age, weight and number of teeth of each with the most enthusiastic interest. She slipped away before any friendly return of questions could be put to her. Pippin liked Mrs. Crimmins and believed gratefully in her friendship, but she hurried toward King's Road discreetly reflecting, "What Missus Crimmins does n't know, won't 'arm 'er!"

Her mind dwelt upon Miss Lawrence's box of clothes in the possession of Mrs. Penley, for she had decided to take it upon herself at once to see what could be done about this.

She set out manfully.

It was a long walk to Bloomsbury Square but Pippin strode on with steady purpose. When she finally arrived at Mrs. Penley's lodging-house, she

slackened her gait and making sure of the number to which Miss Lawrence's letter had been addressed, she paused.

There was nothing unusual about the house. It might even have been a private residence. The ground-floor window was open and two voices, that by tone and accent were to her enjoyably American, reached her from within. Somebody raised a window on the floor above and Pippin sauntered away. All was very quiet, no one was about.

Reaching the corner she turned and came back slowly. At the window that had opened above, she saw by skirting the edge of the pavement and tipping back her head, was a lady in black silk and wearing a widow's cap. She was brushing a black beaded bonnet. She looked down into the street, but took no notice of the loiterer. Presently she went away from the window. The American ladies could still be heard. How to get to Cook's was their open and clarion-voiced discussion. Pippin went closer and peeked over the area railing. The basement door was closed. She walked away slowly, back to the corner, crossed leisurely and hung over the paling, staring into the cool, green square.

Presently she went back to the house. A milk cart was standing outside. She hurried to look again over the area railing. The basement door now stood partly open. She went quickly, noiselessly down the steps, dodged past the door and

huddled in the corner of the area. Within, a girl, the housemaid she judged, joked the dairy-boy. Pippin waited. There was subdued laughing and giggling. A scuffle finally ensued, then she heard the boy coming. His hand grasped the door—he burst out, jerked it to and without noticing Pippin, bounded up the steps and his milk cart rattled as he pushed it away.

Back and forth inside dragged the housemaid. She droned out a little tune rather wearily. The minutes seemed long and the danger of her position imminent to the girl without. At last the footsteps shuffled across the kitchen floor, ascended some bare stairs, a door opened at the top and banged to. Pippin listened. All was silent within. She pushed open the door which she had kept unlatched by her foot, and stepped into the kitchen. It seemed a little dark and for a moment she blinked, then she saw another door opposite the one she had entered. It stood half open. She moved across to it, slipped through, and found herself in a lighter hall that led to the back garden. At the left was the short flight of stairs up which the maid must have gone. She trembled a little at her daring. Inclination was leading her up the steps, hoping to get access to the rooms above. She listened again, and at the same time looking round, her eyes fell upon a trunk projecting from behind the hall door. Pippin stared, gasped, and stepped forward. The

large red letter "L." on a square of white paper was stuck on top of the trunk. Near the corner was pasted a larger square of paper, the red letters of which spelled "Cabin." Under the lock still another placard read "London." Pippin crept cautiously round the trunk. "L. L." was painted in black on the end. She reached out and touched it. She passed her hand over the lock; it was fast. Above footsteps sounded, then the knocker fell upon the street door. She hurried through the kitchen and into the area. When the caller was admitted and the door closed above, she hastened up the steps and still unnoticed, fled from Bloomsbury Square.

Fortune had favored her. The next move, though she hardly knew what it would be, might prove more difficult.

## CHAPTER VIII



ERTRAM GRANVILLE, ESQ., was a playwright. Playwriting he lived for, but he did not live by it. Some of his friends considered him a genius and he indulged the moody temperament with which genius is supposed to be afflicted.

With a mood on, only Dandy, his man, could manage Mr. Granville. He had just come back from Bournemouth where they had tried a one-act tragedy of his on the dog. It had cost the entire amount of money he would have for sometime, and it had not been accepted by the star who was interested in the play; hence the mood. He sat at the window in the front room of his chambers in Jermyn Street, and looked out gloomily. He declined his tea and toast. Dandy had made it with his own hands for his master who had previously declined his breakfast procured at a near-by caterer's. He sat in his silk dressing-gown and smoked and looked out gloomily.

Mr. Granville was a tall man of large proportions. He dressed with care and taste. He wore



a monocle and long mustachios, waxed. When he laughed, as he did now and then in a great guffaw, he displayed wonderful white teeth. The hair was thinning out on top of his head and this annoyed him greatly. While at work writing his plays he massaged his head with a delicately shaped, white hand.

Dandy adored his master; he considered him a personage of consequence who should have been born to a title. He supplied this deficiency, always speaking of him as his lordship. Dandy called himself a gentleman-in-waiting, the exact capacity in which he served his lordship being undetermined.

A few years before, when Dandy was a very young man indeed, he had come to Mr. Granville's chambers, the very same chambers he occupied now, to deliver a pair of riding boots from the firm which employed him as emergency errand boy.

"Can't leave the parcel without the money, sir," he had yelled out according to instructions, when the door opened.

Mr. Granville himself had stood there. He was in a flowered silk dressing-gown then, too, and his hair was a little thin on top, though not quite so thin as now, and he had a perplexed, preoccupied look, a quill pen behind his ear and a cigarette in his mouth.

"What nonsense," Mr. Granville had roared.

"Go back and ask Strots if they want my custom hereafter or not — leave me those boots, too, for I want 'em!"

He took the parcel. Dandy gave it up because he admired Mr. Granville and not for his sixpence.

The next day Dandy returned early to inform the gentleman he had lost his berth as Strots' emergency errand boy.

"Gadzooks!" cried Mr. Granville; "you're well out of *there*!"

He had the boy in. He informed him of his calling as a playwright. He told about his income which was sufficient if he could give up trying out his plays but he could n't. He told him how *one* day, though, he'd come out on top with a winner and nothing but death could stop him. He told him how he always paid his bills, eventually; how everybody knew he would but they pestered him, periodically. He explained how the knocker got on his nerves. Its sound sometimes jolted a splendid idea out of his head completely. He asked Dandy about himself then and hearing that he was an honest orphan and lived with his sister, Mrs. Miles, the wife of Cobbler Miles, and would be glad of a berth where he could "sleep in," Mr. Granville offered it at once. He offered, too, anything in his wardrobe that he did not want and a decent wage, which had since increased. Immediately then, Dandy had the satisfaction of carry-

ing Mr. Granville's check round to his late employers, and of refusing to return to their service.

If Dandy was fond of his lordship, his lordship loved Dandy, in his moody, temperamental way. He called him Dan, short for Daniel.

While Mr. Granville smoked and stared out of the window, Dandy was dusting. A woman took care of the chambers, but she sometimes failed to remove all the dust. His lordship could not bear it; dust got on his nerves. Dandy moved about, working carefully.

"Arcadians very good, sir!" he murmured the information for what it was worth. "Fit to take in from first to last."

No answer.

"Su'think sober in 'Madam Nash' at the Strand, sir; if you dropped in s'y beginning of the second act, you'd get enough — first act is about 'er past an' not nice! The pore gal!"

His lordship seemed to attend and possibly made a mental note of this, then turned back to his gloom. Part of Dandy's duty was taking in the plays. An allowance was made him for a seat in the pit at everything going. His judgment was considered sound by Mr. Granville, who thus saved himself from things not worth his time.

"I'm going to look in on 'The Follies,'" the gentleman-in-waiting continued. "They're cheer-

ful and I 'ear they've new songs and their Potted Pageant is rottin' good fun!"

There was no response from his lordship. Dandy stopped in front of a book-shelf; having dusted it thoroughly, he draped the duster over his arm and took from an inside pocket a photograph. It was a likeness of himself. It was a very good one; the only fault Dandy found was the lack of seriousness. He had tried for a serious picture, for it was a serious matter; the photograph was for Pippin.

Dandy was in love; he needed no reminder of Pippin but he could never be sure until she was wholly his, that she did not need one of him. In spite of the solemnity of the affair, he had been photographed grinning. He was sorry. It appeared undignified. He crossed his legs, leaned an arm on the book-shelf, his head in his hand and regarded the picture.

A budget of papers whirled across the room, glanced off at Dandy's right and startled him with a spring into the air.

"Your lordship just missed me!" he announced. Quickly stowing the picture into his pocket he stooped to pick up the bundle.

"Did n't you hear me speak?" the playwright demanded fretfully.

"Not a word, your lordship," Dandy replied,

opening out the papers upon the table at his master's side. "Did you speak, sir?"

"Gad," Mr. Granville replied, "am I going balmy?"

Dandy appeared to await his master's own decision on this, it was something he frequently asked.

"That Bournemouth business was a good old wipe to get without warning," Mr. Granville said, self-pityingly, "and anyhow this tea is absolutely cold. I don't drink cold tea, y' know."

"I would n't 'ave you, sir." Dandy took up the teapot and the cup of tea his lordship had poured and permitted to cool and went out of the room.

"Dan!" called Mr. Granville.

Dandy whirled round and reappeared at once.

"Anybody call this morning?" inquired Mr. Granville.

"Now, sir, don't you bother!" humored Dandy.

"They can't get blood out of a stone as I can see!"

"Who tried?" his lordship asked.

"Dobbs wanted a little on account, before 'e goes on with the new riding britches, sir. I told 'im 'e could go on with 'em or not, just 's 'e liked; there was no money as I could see for quite a bit a'ead. Tidberry wanted to know how your 'air was comin' along on top, said he'd a new thing 'e fancied would 'elp you, sir, he 'aving studied your case dili-

gent. They've just got another little Tidberry last midnight and are a bit short there — but *you* can't 'elp that, sir. I told 'im to come on with the new tonic and not lose a good customer through foolishness. The garage, sir, sent a man —"

The loud falling of the door-knocker interrupted. Dandy whirled round like a top and, as he started out, Mr. Granville called:

"Dash the blighters!"

"Yes, your lordship," Dandy replied, hurrying along the passage. His lordship always called his creditors blighters, probably to harden his heart until he could manage their bills, which distressed him.

"Bring me my tea," he shouted. "I've got a good idea. I can strengthen that play; don't let 'em bother me; stop 'em knockin'!"

"Right, your lordship!"

The master heard the outside door opened. An angry voice burst forth, but quite suddenly ceased. The low, impressive tones of his gentleman-in-waiting followed. They persisted in patient interruption of the indignant creditor, who finally was heard to laugh. The laugh grew fainter, carried away, the door closed after it.

Mr. Granville smiled and sighed. There was never any fuss, any row, although there was frequent cause, for an angry creditor within his rights is not easily managed. The matter distressed Mr.

Granville. After every one of his ventures, he vowed there would never be another but somehow it went on. It had gone on disastrously for years.

He paced the room. His idea for the improvement of his play developed encouragingly. The gentleman-in-waiting returned with a tray bearing hot tea and more toast. He went out and came back, bringing pencils and paper and a fresh jar of tobacco.

"The portfolio is under my pillow," Mr. Granville said, observing Dandy's tactics with satisfaction.

Dandy fetched this from the next room and placed it beside the tea. Mr. Granville sank into a chair. He took the sheets from the portfolio, glanced over them lovingly, while sipping his tea. He set the cup down and felt out for the toast rack. Nibbling, sipping and finally smoking, he became tranquil, absorbed. He was a perfect gentleman when the working mood was on.

Quite suddenly he looked up at Dandy who stood at hand.

"If those blighters are safe for a bit," he said, "and won't keep on at the knocker, you can go off a while. I shan't need you!"

So unusual was this unselfishness, that Dandy regarded his master with sharp concern.

"You'd better go," he advised further. "I can

swot away here until lunch —" and he became lost again.

Dandy stood for a moment, observing his lordship's perfect calm. He might not be this way again for some time. Dandy was, he reflected with joyous responsibility, engaged to Pippin. There was the picture and if she happened to be about her street he could hand it to her and snatch a glimpse of her. He loped from the room softly. He was in love.

So a little later he swung along the street nattily neat, twirling his slender stick. His pale blue cravat satisfied him extremely.

Arriving at the corner of Jubilee Court and the Fulham Road, Dandy leaned at ease against the lamp-post. He could spare half an hour thus, watching the Court for Pippin's appearance. After that he would permit himself to walk through. She had forbidden him to loiter near her house — besides, Dandy had his own ideas about that.

He had not been waiting long when there approached the young woman who seemed to haunt him.

"We've met before," she hailed.

Dandy raised his cap this time.

"I see you remember me," she smiled.

He did not respond.

"Pippin is a pal o' mine," she went on. "She's moved from 'er old diggin's an' she lives about



here — in Jubilee Court, I believe?" He made no answer. "She's expectin' me to call and I've lost the address."

"Oh!" Dandy said suspiciously.

"You don't believe me," Doll sniffed. "You don't want to, perhaps," she shrewdly added. "Oh, very well. Wait an' see. Oh ho!"

"Oh ho?" Dandy questioned. "What d'yer mean?"

"Nothink," Doll grinned; "nothink at all!"

"What d'yer *mean*, oh hoing then?" Dandy's color rose.

"My word, keep your 'air on," Doll said, backing away.

Dandy eyed her, at once yearning to inquire about her insinuation, and to throttle her for it.

"I was goin' to tell yer; Pippin's pals with a young lady," the creature simpered. "I see 'em out together yesterd'y."

She waited, but as he said nothing further, she thrust out her tongue and walked away.

"The pore thing's balmy," he muttered. "I'll warn Victoria A. of 'er!" Yet he could not thus lightly dismiss thought of her. What was she? And she had implied — what? And was that why Victoria Alexandra seemed afraid of her? He ought to know!

He lit his pipe and settled back against the lamp-post. From her house, Pippin presently emerged.



"Nothink, . . . nothink at all!"

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**B**

**L**

She was neat, the rosy contour of her face was perfect as ever, the little curls in a tempting row beneath her queer little cap, but Dandy saw she was preoccupied. She approached with head bent, eyes aground.

"'Ere we are!" saluted her lover.

Pippin started.

"It's *yow!*" she said, smiling. "'Ow's 'is lordship?"

"Quiet for the time being," Dandy answered. "I got 'im going on 'is pl'y for a bit. 'E 'opes to bring it round an' what with his entire quarter's income sunk there, I 'ope 'e may. I 'ate seein' 'im suffer — he can't stand suffering. It tells all over 'im, even affects 'is 'air which we *are* in for it to keep from fallin' off the top of 'is 'ead!"

"Pore thing!" sympathized Pippin.

"An' I've my work cut out to keep off the creditors," Dandy went on. "They give me the sick! Know 'e's good for it, and 'ow they go on!"

"Pre'aps they need what's comin' to 'em," suggested Pippin.

"Not they!" Dandy emptied his pipe. "I knows 'em, personally!" He winked.

"Tidberry the 'air-dresser is not the kind to go in for a dossy wife and five children besides a mother's 'elp — no, dash 'im — not if 'e could n't well afford it!"

"Some does," said Pippin.

"I s'y, old gal," her lover looked at her earnestly, "you're out o' sorts; you're not yourself. What's up, Victoria Alexandra?"

The namesake of two queens smiled bravely.

"I think it's me liver!" she said.

She disliked to admit having searched in vain all the day before for a situation — not just for something she fancied, but for any sort of honest work. Charing! Charing even had been denied her for lack of a character. People *were* getting fussy. They were enough to drive a straight one wrong, Pippin almost believed. Yet she paused in justice. There was a time she could not have been trusted. Was she paying for it now?

"Victoria Alexandra — dear, you're not liverish," Dandy said.

He tapped his forehead. "It's 'ere you're sufferin', I know the symptoms, they resemble 'is lordship's! What is it? Tell it to Dandy, dear."

His tenderness moved her, a lump filled her throat but she smiled.

"I've a lady stoppin' along of me, old cockalorum," she said brightly, "and I keep thinkin' of 'er and 'ow sweet an' beautiful an' good —"

"Blimy!" Dandy said; "I've 'eard about 'er!"

"'Eard!" queried Pippin.

"She's been about. That's 'un you call Doll. She told me about this lady of yours — saw you out together."

"Doll told you?" Pippin's eyes widened. "Saw us out together?" She frowned, recalling. "Once Miss an' me met 'ere on this corner — yesterd'y it was!"

"I s'y, old gal, are yer frightened of this Doll or what?"

"Frightened of 'er — me —?"

Patiently Dandy saw he was not yet to know for Pippin's laugh rang out loudly, and tugging at his sleeve she murmured, "Come along and walk!"

So Doll was on! Her heart beat fearfully. She had no idea Doll knew. She had not seen her since the day she became installed in Jubilee Court. Doll had never made a practice of going out through the day, yet of late she seemed always about. Pippin hurried her lover down the Fulham Road.

"Did she talk much?" she asked anxiously.

Dandy shook his head.

"Not it, but she's got an aloodin' manner I dislikes." He stole a glance at her downcast face.

"'Ere," he urged, and to quiet his own misgivings as well as hers, drew her toward the edge of the pavement where there was a stand with a great glass jar upon it. From this a fat man was selling highly colored pineapple juice.

"Cool an' sweet, cool an' sweet," the fat man called.

Pippin accepted and drank off a cupful; and, appearing greatly refreshed, was urged to another.

"It's nice!" she admitted.

Dandy then drank three cupsful, in rapid succession.

"*I've* got a motto," Dandy sang, clearly to cheer her; "alw'ys merry an' bright — I've simply gotter sing —" He took a few dancing steps, just by way of amusing Pippin.

"It's done you good," beamed the fat man who suddenly, agreeably, discovered himself rapidly selling out, for others following Dandy's lead and amused by his antics were stopping too.

There was a rush to be next at the cup.

"Ladies an' children first," called the fat man in the calm voice of one averting a fire panic.

He had caught the eye of a man carrying one child and leading another, making for the syrupy refreshment. His missus followed, but attracted by Dandy's fun lagged behind. The family were clearly on a holiday and in holiday mood everything is pleasing.

"'E is a comic," chuckled the woman, nudging her eldest boy to appreciation.

Pippin nodded to her in friendliness. "'E is a comic," she agreed, and catching Dandy's arm, drew him along.

"I shall tike you to see the musical comedy that bit I sang yer comes from," he said. "It's worth it."

"You *will* be a spend'rift," laughed Pippin.



"'E is a comic"



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In spite of her frugal mind, she admired his generosity.

"But I saves too, old gal," he said. "I've nothink actually put by now, but there's two month coming to me with interest — ha'-penny on the shillin', y' know, for every week 'is lordship is be'ind. It's his idea; 'e is a good master and 'e do get behind. If I quite run out of small change 'e lets me in on a bit o' his, and does n't always tike it out o' me!"

Pippin was listening and thinking and hurrying her lover along.

"Now about this lady?" he asked.

She related enthusiastically. She had found the lady fainting in the street and brought her home, rewarded by discovering in her an actress — down on her luck and about to take cheaper lodgings. She would pay the rent and stay in Jubilee Court temporarily. She had a little money only, but would soon have plenty. She was a young and lovely lady and — an actress!

"If she's looking for a good pl'y, 'is lordship is 'er man," said Dandy.

"She does want a good un," Pippin replied, "but you must n't forget she's hard up!"

"'Is lordship's exact case," reflected Dandy. "But I'll stand by 'im; he s'ys 'is future depends on me standin' by 'im!"

Pippin reflected.

"I've got to stand by Miss Lawrence, too, old chap," she said soberly. "She'll marry way up too — an earl maybe. Oh, I've such a feeling about 'er. I've got to 'elp her!"

"'Elp her buy a pl'y?" he teased, "or marry —"

"G'on," she said, banging him, "you don't know actresses. She does n't want a whole pl'y, only a bit in a pl'y; but this I will s'y; I wants a situation! I've been hunting till I near dropped and now I don't know where to turn!"

There was an anxious tremor in her voice. She glanced up at him desperately. The confession hurt her pride; yet, she would wish him to tell her, if ever she could help him.

"You're worried, little woman!" he said quickly. "Why 'ave n't you mentioned it before? I don't s'y su'think can be got in a minute, but I s'y it *can* be got, an' Dandy's the one to do it for you — the one to 'elp you in everything — see?"

She smiled up at him, with a little sigh of relief. Dandy seemed to be thoughtfully considering a place of possible opening; he pulled his cap further over his eyes.

"Listen," she said; "*anythink* to start like, d' yer see?"

"In course," he said, "when it comes to *anythink* permanent which you'll be wanting soon too, I 'ope you 'll tike me, what?"

"Yes, Dandy," she said. "I will."

Smiling, he drew something from his pocket and handed it to her.

"What ho!" she cried in delight. "I'm glad to get that! 'Ow'd you ever think of it?"

"Next thing," Dandy said, "is you're givin' me a likeness of yourself; it's customary when a couple's walkin' out, y' know!"

Just then he caught sight of her shabby little shoe which was parting company with the sole. "You'll take that shoe round to Miles in Park Walk, above 'ere," he said. "It won't cost you a penny piece. I'll drop in there first. Miles is me brother-in-lor', dear, but a widower now. He's the one I was round this w'y to see the night I come upon you."

She was a little hurt that he had seen her shoe, yet he made it a matter of such tenderness that she accepted good-humoredly.

"Right, old chap, thank *you*! I'll be in clover soon and get even o' you."

"That night I 'appened round and found you," he continued dreamily.

"I must be off," Pippin said, looking up and down the street. "I'm goin' to see about su'think in the West End."

She dropped his likeness in her deep pocket, adding, "I am pleased with that; it'll set on the chest of drawers."

Dandy consulted a large watch of pinchbeck metal

and murmuring, "I 'll be off too, dear," they shook hands.

"Don't fret, old gal, you 'll 'ear from Dandy soon!" he promised.

She waited until from the top of an omnibus he waved farewell with the newest things in tweed caps, a present from his lordship.

Then she continued her way in deep reflection. She had truly reckoned without Doll, when she established herself in Jubilee Court.

## CHAPTER IX



RAY of sunlight came in the window, slanted through the canary's cage and circled round a pink rose of the wall-paper. Teddy hastened into his bath, fluttering and chattering and sending out little waterfalls.

Leonora sat up in bed and looked at the tiny creature. His bath finished, the canary hopped upon the perch and began preening his yellow coat.

"You lucky little monkey," the young lady observed enviously, "you are *sure* of your clothes."

With an air of satisfaction the canary chirped and hopped. He picked at the seeds. He scattered out the kind least cared for and greedily selected his favorite brand. The love-birds across the Court twittered sociably. The flutist began her practice. Leonora sighed. She looked all through the *Westminster Gazette* again. It was a day-old paper Pippin had given her to read while her pink-flounced frock was being pressed. Pippin had taken it below to the apartments of Mrs. Crimmins which, as the caretaker had said, were more convenient for working in.

Leonora was thinking of her clothes left at Mrs. Penley's. She had told Pippin about leaving her trunk there, but the news had seemed to occasion no surprise or interest. Leonora put aside the *Gazette*. She reached for some writing materials left upon the table near by and leaned back upon her pillow. She began a letter. She wrote:

London, July 2.

*Dear Charlie:*

For this note, you are indebted to the tardiness of the young person who is pressing my favorite pink frock, which I am waiting to put on. I have moved from Bloomsbury Square. I am living in the dearest little street called Jubilee Court, Chelsea. I am much better suited. In the first place it is cheaper and next, the quiet seclusion is ideal for study. I shall love committing a part here. You will laugh. My neighbor across the way is lady flutist in the Woman's Band at a well-known place of amusement here, called the Earl's Court Exhibition. She practises at intervals all day long. She starts out every evening in her band costume, which is a skirt and coat of mouse color with red braid trimming and brass buttons, cap to match. A little procession of eager children escort her out of the Court. Her going is a daily spectacular event. Her flute practice is music to the ears of Jubilee Court. Her affections are centered round a cage of love-birds that also serve as window ornament. I have heard from the caretaker of our court that the birds are all that remains of her recently

blighted dream of love. I have heard from the same source that she "p'ys reg'lar!" I quite love the little street. It reminds me of what somebody wrote of the "sweet security of streets!" And the two rows of little houses, with their white door-stones and green doors and green window-boxes full of flowers! And the quaint small windows! Such sturdy houses they are, so enduring, like the inhabitants upon whom when idle, I look down from my window, for their evenings are spent passing up and down, chatting and visiting in the Court. Oh, yes, and last night a drunken woman strayed in from the Fulham Road. A young man came and got her away with the awful threat that she would find herself in "Black Maria in two twos" if she didn't mind his warning. I am anxious to remain in London, but as I am so impatient of more apprenticeship, and minor parts seem to be the prevailing opportunity for a town engagement, a lead would entice me *en tour*.

I believe I hear my pink dress returning. How are the Clarks? Is Elvira still bent on a stage career? Somehow, I do not think her fitted. I like to get your letters.

Yours very sincerely,

L. L.

Leonora looked up as Pippin came in. Her pink frock and other garments dangled over Pippin's arm. Everything smelled of the fresh outdoors and cleansing sunshine.

"I 'ope the flutist does n't burst before night



comes," Pippin observed. "They's nothink but what can be 'ad too much of, *I s'y!*"

She looked up from the foot of the bed where she was spreading out the clothes.

"What I means, Miss, is, it's awright to 'ear a nice flute — part o' the time like, but with it a-goin' an' Missus Crimmins goin' too, about 'ow reg'lar the flutist p'ys 'er rent —!"

She stopped.

"Is *our* rent due?" Leonora asked quickly.

"No indeed!" Pippin cried. "That's just it. If ours *was* due, I could bear Missus Crimmins goin' on."

Miss Lawrence began counting on her fingers, the days she had been in Jubilee Court. Pippin hurried to the hall to fetch the water for her lady's bath. She had set Miss Lawrence to figuring and worrying, the very things she had wished to spare her.

"I've got the next week's rent put by, Miss," she lied serenely as she came back to the room; "they's nothink to fret about there. Missus Crimmins's idea is to get it in fortnightly in advance an' I don't 'old with that!"

"Well," agreed Miss Lawrence, "not when one has n't much of anything in hand!"

She looked into Pippin's face, thinking she missed some expanse of ruddy cheek. Had she not a little less color, too?

Pippin had as usual fastened the pink frock for Miss Lawrence, when with a final pat on the last button she remarked musingly, "It is queer that manager, Toby 'Amilton, does n't write!"

Miss Lawrence took up her gloves and purse and the letter she had written, before she answered.

"It is queer!" she agreed.

As she reached the door Pippin stopped her and pointed to the fireplace and the teapot.

"'Alf a mo', Miss! Now could you get yourself a cup of tea like, s'y I was n't here to do it when you come in? I knows yer!" she jibed, "an' I'm afraid you'd do without it, if I was n't 'ere to see to it, unless you *promised* me —"

"I promise!" laughed Leonora. "I'll get my own tea."

"Awright then." Pippin looked relieved. "There's su-think advertised in a paper I could wish I'd seen before, but I may be in time yet. It's off Regent's Park way, Miss, over in St. John's Wood an' it'll tike some time to get there an' back."

"Promise *me*, Pippin, that you will not let me, any thought of me, stand in the way of your taking any employment you can get!" Miss Lawrence insisted earnestly.

"I promises!" It was spoken a little faintly, but she said again, "In course — I promises."

Leonora stood in King's Road as she had done

every morning since her arrival in the Court and awaited a bus. It seemed, as Pippin had observed, rather strange that Mr. Toby Hamilton did not answer even her second letter asking for an appointment.

A bus drew up, with the accommodating consideration of a private equipage. The driver slashed the side with his whip, thus informing the conductor of a prospective passenger. The conductor with the well-paid civility of a private footman leaped aground, and eyeing her interrogatively murmured:

"Strand, Charing Cross, Bank!"

He took her arm, put her into the bus and bawled out, "Strike!"

At this signal the omnibus started again on its way.

"Strand; Charing Cross?" inquired the conductor as he took her sixpence.

She nodded absently.

He chose a little red ticket from a packet of red, white and blue ones which he carried, punched it and with threepence change gave it to her.

"Thank *you*!" Leonora murmured with the automatic politeness she was acquiring in London.

She gazed at the red ticket. Her preoccupation this morning had cost her a penny extra. She usually rode to Piccadilly Circus for twopence and from there walked to the manager's offices. She

rode on to Charing Cross now and here the bus stopped and the conductor beckoned her out.

"Where do you wish to go, Missy?" he inquired politely, as she paused for a moment on the walk.

"Norfolk Street, Strand," she said suddenly.

Could Pippin have seen how forlornly uncertain her lovely young lady had seemed she would have sworn eternal friendship to the conductor.

"You can walk it, Miss, in five minutes," he told her. "Str'ight a'ead, a little turnin' to your right, leads to the Embankment — can't miss it. It'd be another penny to ride!"

Leonora took this for what it was intended, well-meant information. One might take a cab or taxi but ride an extra penny's worth in an omnibus — it was almost never done. You always got out and walked that much. She thanked the conductor and hurried away, leaving him on the pavement crying, "Benk, benk! Benk of England and St. Paul's Church-yard. Liverpool Street —"

The brakes fell, the bus rattled on. It suddenly came to Leonora what a busy man such a great personage as Mr. Toby Hamilton must be. What hundreds of such letters as hers he must get! Sometimes a thing is yours for the asking, but sometimes again a thing is only yours by the most persistent, and oftentimes audacious endeavor to obtain it. Leonora's profession was not one in which to stand back and wait. A little hopeful flush tinted

her young face as she entered Mr. Hamilton's office building. At that moment a pretty woman in huge black hat and turquoise eardrops trailed her embroidery *anglaise* frock out of the lift. She glanced at Leonora. Her happy smile, the tilt of head, her little shrug of earnest importance indicated very recently achieved good fortune. She hurried out to a waiting cab, conspicuously directing the driver with a blue, paper-bound manuscript.

"A part!" Leonora caught the thrill of her excitement.

Nothing in the actress's theatrical manner offended her. It had been simply a mark of joy which the little woman could not hide from a sister of her profession.

Leonora stepped into the lift, hope beating high. She asked the guard to put her out on Mr. Hamilton's floor. The top of his door was glass and across this in black letters the name T. H. Hamilton and his office hours. Her first glance into the main room, lit upon a printed request nailed to the wall.

"Interviews not granted without  
previous appointment."

Within a little fenced inclosure a young woman wearing a heavy fringe left some papers, and with an air of awful boredom confronted the caller.

Leonora lifted her glance again to the placard and laughed lightly.

"I have n't an appointment," she confided in a very winning manner. "I *have* written for one, though, twice and Mr. Hamilton does n't answer!"

The stenographer remained unmoved, lifting her brows noncommittally.

"I might send in my card?" Leonora ventured to suggest.

The stenographer looked at the big clock above the printed placard and compared it to the gun-metal watch pinned to her blouse. Then she opened the gate of her little fence and came out, threw open a door at her left and as she took Leonora's card, waved her into the small room. She returned through the main room to one across and labeled private, knocked and went in.

Leonora thought of Mahomet and the mountain; would Mahomet come to her or send for her to go to him? She must contrive a graceful attitude in case of the former. She rose and shook out her pink ruffles, pushed the chair to one side, sank back in a simple sideways posture and leaned her chin upon her hand, elbow gracefully propped upon the chair-arm. She relaxed her features to appear calm, smiled not to seem severe or depressed, but kept sober enough to appear in earnest.

Suddenly something bumped into her chair from behind. She jumped to her feet.

"I beg your pardon!" some one apologized. A tall man faced her through a half open door back of the chair.

"It's all my fault," stammered Leonora. "I didn't see the door."

She looked greatly discomfited. He came into the room, closing the door. Then he applied a monocle, looked more closely at her and smiled.

"I never come in that door—*never* do!" He pointed to the door. "I always come in the main entrance." He waved his hat toward the outside room. "I must have startled you!"

"Just a little—" she smiled too.

He was a broad, tall, well-dressed Englishman with a beaky nose and appeared most amiable. The private door opened. Leonora moved forward and met the impressive countenance of the stenographer.

"Mr. Hamilton *can't* spare the time this morning," she enunciated clearly. "And he *can't* give you a definite appointment either, but about ten one morning the last of this week. If you'd care to chance it that way he might manage to see you! Sorry!"

Leonora turned abruptly away. She resented the "Sorry"! that was not Mr. Hamilton's. She glanced up at the Englishman. As she went out, she heard him say:

"Granville, yes! Mr. Bertram Granville! Yes,

yes — sent for me and I'm here, tell him, please. He's got the scenario —"

She returned to the lift, vaguely conscious of having heard the Englishman's name before. And she was not wholly downcast. One day next week. Yes, she would try again and yet again. And Pippin had said she could manage the rent once more. They would economize on food. And she must urge Pippin to keep her reminded of the broad a's and delicate r's she wished to acquire. She returned to the Strand and walked along in the direction of Trafalgar Square. She took another little turning, came to an uninviting entrance and at the top of a narrow flight of stairs, paused before the door of a "Dramatic Agency." The words were printed here, too, in black letters on the glass panel with the invitation to "Walk In": and below this at either side in the lower corners the names of the agency's managers, "Mr. Harvey Worthington Logan" and "Mr. Martin Henry Hart." Leonora walked in.

The room was full this morning. It reeked of scent and tobacco smoke. In spite of her self-assurance, Leonora experienced always an embarrassing shyness upon entering an agency and becoming for that moment the center of attentive wonder. She had never tried agencies until lately. She slipped into the nearest chair.



Mounting the ladder of Fame was a difficult business, she knew, but sight of this patient waiting saddened her. The heavy man stalking restlessly, portraying his gloom! The leading lady's emotional dignity stirring the lace of her fichu, as she sits pale, under a drooping feather. The sou-brette's smile, her flashing teeth, keen eyes upon the private sanctum of Messrs. Logan and Hart. It was only fear of leaving a stone unturned that brought Leonora to the agencies. She was sorry to come, too, for the environment intimidated her at a time when she needed her whole strength. It made her think of Charlie Browne and Goshen, Indiana—not longingly she said to herself, just lovingly. Then she tried to think of her professional sisters less seriously, to imagine them, too, with a home they had deserted for Art! She began observing them more lightly. The ladies all *would* wear huge flopping hats with feathers, some more and some less ancient, but feathers, always feathers.

At home she reflected, a faded hat was so neatly hidden under veils. Leonora was planning a color of veil for a thin little creature with a hectic spot on each cheek, when a man created a commotion by jumping up, his watch open in his hand and shouting.

"There's not a person passed in or out of that room since I came here an hour ago!" He pointed

at the manager's private office, walked across the room, and threw open the door.

Everybody rose and peered after him.

A boy sat at a desk, his feet upon it, enjoying a comic paper.

"What does it mean?" demanded the man.

"Where is Mr. Harvey, or Mr. Logan?"

The boy stumbled up, for an instant speechless. Then he nodded at another door; it was a convenient exit.

"Mr. 'Arvey's been called to a theater unexpectedly and Mr. Logan will be in any minute, sir!"

"Gad!" cried the man.

He turned and swung out through the crowd.

For a moment Leonora was sickened and discouraged. This sort of ill luck was unusual, she knew, and probably Mr. Hart and Mr. Logan had nothing to offer anybody and deeming it unbusiness-like to close their doors to the hopeful comers, they had just slipped out like that. It was unkind but after all they, too, were human.

Leonora went out. There were other agencies she could try. But at last, very weary and yet hopeful of what might come of seeing the great Mr. Hamilton, she thought she would return to Jubilee Court. She remembered that little Pippin was out, too, seeking work and wondered about her luck, anxiously, for Pippin was trying, bravely!

At least Leonora rejoiced, she had done right in staying in Jubilee Court! She decided then to go to the theater of The Tenderfoot's late failure where the kindly old doorman at the stage-entrance kept her letters.

There was one from Charlie Browne. When she found herself very eager for its contents, she firmly placed it in her bag, unopened. She returned to Piccadilly Circus, and climbed to the top of the bus that would take her back to Jubilee Court.

## CHAPTER X



HE flute was getting on Leonora's nerves. Her dark moments of depression were constantly being rendered more drear by the gay notes which seemed to flaunt the contrasting circumstances of her neighbor. At times she wished she owned a musical instrument, something to give forth a loud noise, a trombone for instance. With that she could drown out the flute.

The flutist had a gay new cap to her uniform. It was red, in place of the gray one only banded with red. She wore it as jauntily as Pippin did hers of fur. And another thing, the flutist's manner had changed.

Leonora had been nine days in Jubilee Court and having seen her every day from the first had at once noticed the change. Something decidedly pleasant must have happened. She was not the creature that had formerly departed, drooping, from the street every evening to her task at the Earl's Court Exhibition. She went now in a manner that became the new red cap and new, high-heeled, patent-leather slippers. She laughed with

the children who formed her admiring and nightly escort. She walked more briskly. Probably the light and life of her existence, of whose cruel treatment Mrs. Crimmins had spoken, had come back, or had she got a new one!

At this notion Leonora gave a little sniff. Charlie Browne's last two letters were still unanswered. Leonora decided now after some reflection to send him a reply. This was contrary to her resolve of a few minutes previous. It had seemed as well not to write any more to Charlie. There was nothing that thrilled of success to relate.

The first of Mr. Browne's letters began as usual on the business sheet of his pump concern of Goshen, Indiana.

*Dear Runaway:*

Why no word from you? Has old London swallowed you up, my little Molly? There, I should not have inserted that my, but if I cross it out you will be more sure to see — so I leave it for you to erase. I have the New York papers but fail to find any account of "The Tenderfoot"! The Clarks ask me about you — do let me hear. I should like to enlighten them. Elvira is not certain which is best, a year at a dramatic academy, or to plunge right in and seek a beginning in the theater! If you let me know your opinion I can tell her. Funny how all the girls here seem to be daffy about the stage. Sid Long does n't want Elvira Clark to go on the stage. Next I sup-

pose she will take to London. But no, she's not daring enough. I beg for news of you.

Yours always,

C.

The other letter, which had quickly followed, began anxiously:

*Dear Molly:*

The Clarks tell me they have heard from somebody who saw "The Tenderfoot" in London, that the play was a fiasco and would only run the week out. Then in that case, you are coming back aren't you, dear child? Of course not to me. I am not so presuming, but you will come back to America.

The pump business is splendid. Two recent orders from the East startled our little town. I am in several minds as to buying a car—there are so many makes! There is a great chance too, to get a fine, stone house here, really a good investment. It is n't quite complete but the man has gone broke. He has to get the thing off his hands. I've about decided to snap it up. Sid Long would take it and on the level I believe Elvira would let him, if it was n't for disappointing her mother. Mrs. Clark likes Sid all right, but she wants Elvira to set the world afire and let Sid go hang. He's a nice fellow too. I'm sorry for old Sid Long.

Say, Molly, you won't stick over there now, will you? Maybe you're already on your way back. Hurrah! I just want to feel you're back, home again, safe, that's all. Don't be afraid to let me know. I promise

never to *bother* you again. I ought to hear from you next English mail. A cable is quickest if everything is n't all right. God bless you,

C.

Leonora excused her pang of tenderness upon the reflection that the letter would move an iceberg. And she was not an iceberg. She was very fond of Charlie Browne. She glanced at his picture on the chest of drawers. It was too bad. But their paths lay apart. Pumps and the stage! Goshen, Indiana, *was* a lovely spot. As she looked back it seemed lovelier than ever before. The people there, too, were really awfully nice. She had no family of her own, just some cousins with whom she could have lived and been very welcome, but she had not cared to.

She felt certain now as she thought of them that she could never go back to Goshen until she had made a name. The cousins had not predicted success for Leonora. They were very narrow, if nice, cousins with a restricted appreciation of the artistic temperament.

Leonora determined upon a candid letter to Charlie. She would not deceive him, yet neither could she write things to worry him. She began:

London, July —.

*Dear Charlie:*

Before this you have got my letter about "The Tenderfoot's" failure and my intention to remain in

England in search of something else. I have n't found anything suitable yet, but when one is thrown out by a play's failure at the height of a season it is not so easy to get another engagement—a part one likes. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"—but I am not a bit that way. I am enjoying London and studying the types.

I have never told you about Mr. Toby Hamilton. He is the *greatest* man in London. He has achieved it. His greatness was not thrust upon him like King Edward's. Mr. Hamilton achieved greatness first, by treating all in this profession with whom he came in contact, like the dirt beneath his feet. To-day he did that to me. Yet I am not annoyed and the hope that lay with him is only deferred and my heart is pounding normally. It is something to have seen him. I have just come from the interview. I had called six times before I went to-day; one day I went twice. He did not get up when I was shut into his lair by his stenographer, or even look up until I stumbled over my own parasol and trying to cover my confusion sat down in the wrong chair. He wanted me to sit in the chair beside his desk, where the light glared in my eyes. Anyhow my complexion could stand it! There was a little center square of colored glass in the window above him and it made the oddest luster round the top of Mr. Hamilton's head, which is quite bald. It had the effect of a halo and I thought of Saint Anthony, whom an Irish wardrobe mistress in New York told me was my patron saint. Before I had given myself away by my accent, Mr. Ham-



ilton burst out: "What *I* can't understand, is how you aspiring young Americans all get over here! Where do you get the money?" Now money is not ever supposed to be an Englishman's concern. He has it or he has n't, but he does not talk about it. He leaves it to the American, whose first inquiry upon presentation to a British subject of sufficiently prosperous appearance is reputed to be, "What did you make your money in?" This is the Englishman's joke. If you ever come to London, do not ask it—do not speak of pumps! I digress. I began telling Mr. Hamilton at once how I had come with "The Tenderfoot" company from New York—the management having brought us over. He was interested in this. I assured him that I meant to succeed in London. That was why I had stayed. I even admitted that I am a runaway! A runaway from those at home, whom while loving *me* still will not consider my ambition and determination to win out in my art. I said to him, "Mr. Hamilton, I am sure I have something in me!" Before he replied he considered me very seriously; seriously *and* approvingly so that I feel *something will come* of the interview. They say he never commits himself until he actually signs you. His answer to my expressed conviction of my own talent was too evasive! "My child, is it Indiana or Michigan that you bring those r's from? I confuse the two states, having stopped so briefly in each." For a moment I was hurt, but only for a moment. My humor stirred me from the heap of dust I had been crushed to and I suddenly laughed. Then after

a long stony, staring silence Mr. Hamilton too, laughed. He promised to remember me and took my address. I did not make a stumbling exit. He saw me to the door. He said, "Good morning, Miss Lawrence!"

The theater of "The Tenderfoot's" late failure is closed but the old door-keeper is always at the stage entrance and lovely about looking after my letters, so address me as before. This is wholly about myself, but you asked me to write about myself. About Elvira; I think her unfitted for the stage, and I should n't be surprised if Sid Long won out, either. Elvira always liked him. Let me know what kind of car you buy and all about the house. It would be a good investment. Will you and your mother live in it? I am so glad your business is going on well.

Yours always sincerely,

MOLLY.

Leonora half heartedly sealed her letter. It seemed a little as though she was fooling Charlie Browne. It would have been honest—and would n't it have been courageous to admit her predicament?

Uncertain footsteps came toward the door; it opened and Pippin, grinning, lunched rakishly in. To Leonora her appearance betokened happy satisfaction in achievement.

"You've found employment, Pippin!" she cried, rising to meet the girl.

Pippin nodded, raised one eyebrow and see-sawed toward the table.

"'Ave it your own w'y, Miss Lawrence! Anythink you like."

She sat upon the edge of the table, eyed the floor, and mused humorously.

"I've been engiged to teash Princess, 'igh-nobs, what's 'er name — to teash 'er to pick pockets!"

Leonora recoiled from the tipsy little creature. Eyes searched for her hat, yearned toward the door. Pippin shrewdly caught the meaning of the measured glance.

"Don't go!" she said convivially. "I got *you* su'think too. You're to dance and sing a bit by command —"

"Be quiet!" commanded Leonora desperately.

"I won't," replied Pippin. "By command of 'Is Royal 'Ighness —" she threw a heavy-eyed glance at the picture of her revered king. "By 'is command, you're to caper about and sing a bit at Windsor Castle —"

"Pippin," Leonora urged, daring a few steps nearer her. "Won't you take off your cap and lie down — over there on your little bed?"

Pippin struck her cap instantly to the floor.

"But I won't go to bed!"

She stood up defiantly.

"Yes, you will," returned Leonora quietly.

Pippin waved her arms.

"Don't try puttin' me to bed! Me ways is not lovin' when I'm —"

But as Leonora backed away, Pippin laughed. She lurched toward her.

"You pore gal, you are afeared o' me!"

"Yes, Pippin!" Leonora humored. "Yes, I'm afraid of you." She retreated to the window.

Pippin stopped, eyeing her regretfully.

"S' too bad! Let's sing," she suddenly invited. "Somewhere the sun is shinnin—ing. You won't, eh? Very well I'll go to bed to please yer!"

She turned toward the white muslin curtains, walked forward and clutching them looked back at Leonora. Some consciousness of misdemeanor, of fearful awakening, broke through the cloud upon her brain.

"Don' mike off now, Missy darling. I want—a tell yer 'ow this 'appened! Mind," she cried, waving a fist, "I could n't even get a—" suitable adjective seemed wanting, "milk cart to push. Ain't that enough to—"

She swung round, threw up both arms and slipped backward between the curtains, noisily, into her bed.

Pallid, shocked and trembling, Leonora stood staring at the two protruding and undignified little feet. Pippin muttered unintelligibly in a sorrowing voice. "Pubs" were always handy she stated thickly. Too handy. Anybody could drop into a pub and be comfy.

"It's a beautiful shame too!" she regretted.

But very quickly she subsided in sleep. Leonora put on her hat, caught up her bag and letters and went to the door. Her hand upon the knob, she halted. She looked back—but the wantonness of those protruding shoes between the curtains! They represented a predicament sadly low in life, association with which Leonora almost believed she never could live down. If Charlie Browne knew of this.

She opened the door and walked downstairs, slowly along the street. But she could not think immediately for herself, only for Pippin. Left like this, the child would be thrown into the street. And it was not alone that. Waking, realizing her slip—Leonora was sure this was a backward slip in her intended reformation—Pippin would be driven to desperation. Pity mingling with tried, but truly growing, affection for this youthful desperado, moved her, turned her back.

She reached the room again, hurried to the curtains, seized Pippin's ankles and placed her, with desperate patience in a more proper, not to say comfortably reclining attitude.

Leonora then bolted the door and prepared to resist visitors. She sat down and with worthy effort fixed her mind upon the stories of a tu'penny booklet recently lent by Mrs. Crimmins.

She determined not to dwell in thought upon the

sleeper. At any rate she slept on, quietly, and was giving no further offense. Night came and Leonora, dutiful to Pippin's sober memory, made herself a cup of tea and then she too went to bed.

A big clock somewhere over London struck the hours, each one finding Leonora still awake. Sometime past midnight she got out of bed and kneeling beside it, said a little prayer of her childhood. Afterwards, she presently slept. It was just before daybreak that cautious movements awakened her. She listened. It was Pippin!

"Pippin!" she called sharply.

No answer.

Leonora reached for candle and matches she had placed near her bed. The light, raised high, revealed Pippin, crouching, head hanging in all the agony of debasement.

"What are you doing there?" demanded Leonora.

"I'm going — away."

Leonora left her bed.

"Why are you going?"

"So's yer won't need to go yourself."

She was a trembling, pitiable little object.

"You've no place to go," Leonora reminded, as Pippin had once done with her.

Pippin raised her head.

"There's the bottom o' the river, Miss — for the likes o' me!"

Leonora smothered a cry.

"That is a coward's talk!" she said, assuming scorn.

Perhaps a little relief came into Pippin's face.

"I've stayed with you —" it was hard to taunt, but Leonora knew no other way. "I stayed when I was tempted to leave you — yesterday. I wanted you to know, that I knew, that yesterday was your last slip —"

The little head lifted. Hope, life came back to Pippin's face.

"The last!" nodded Leonora.

Then having adopted stern tactics, she raised a commanding finger.

"Go to bed, Pippin. Undress and — go to bed properly!"

Pippin shuffled across the room, seized the outstretched hand and kissed it passionately. Then she went back to her bed.

Morning broke, the morning after! Pippin's shame enveloped her. She was certain of nothing — except her past life. Very possibly it was to be the same in future. She made no resolutions. Only — Miss Lawrence, the best and most beautiful of beings, believed the past — was passed — with yesterday.

And when they were up facing the new day, she behaved as though what she said she believed, was already true. They had just finished a meager



Pippin penitent





breakfast when Mrs. Crimmins dropped in. She was amiable and did not come, it seemed, to dun.

"Nothink but good luck ever fell to any one in this room—" she had but cheerfully begun, when in the hall a deadly calm voice spoke.

"Mother, are you in that room?"

It was Mrs. Crimmins's turn to show alarm.

"That's my Sally, upon me word!" she said, in surprise.

She bucked up and herself opened the door to her daughter.

Standing there, his hand in Sally's, a little creature peered out eagerly from under a peaked cap. Pippin cried out and opened her arms. Into them leaped the boy.

"I s'y, but I 'ave missed yer, Pip!"

He suffered her embraces gladly, even in the presence of so many, and when finally she released him, tucked his hand within hers.

"Come and speak to the pretty lady," urged Pippin, leading him forward.

Here again he shyly suffered a kiss with every one looking on.

"We've come part way by train an' part way by bus," he said, addressing them all; "ain't we, Aunt Sally? This is me new trousers an' blouse, Aunt Sally made from 'er old blue cotton skirt."

He was hardly the same boy Mrs. Crimmins's Sally had taken away. He strutted toward her,

took her hand and looking up stood waiting for her to speak. All waited.

Sally had maintained a stern manner, her eye fixing her mother accusingly.

"You know, Mother, you've not done right by me!" she said quietly. "I've been imposed on."

Receiving no answer from the plainly abashed Mrs. Crimmins, she turned to Pippin.

"I can't keep him for nothin' and be imposed on, so I've come to throw him back on your hands!"

"She said she should do it, Pippin," little Hal added. "Ain't yer no money? Has Dad been after it ag'in?"

"Very well!" said Pippin, eying Sally. "I'm very glad to 'ave 'im back then. Did I *ask* you to tike 'im?"

"Indeed," Sally suddenly reversed her tactics. "Glad to have him back, are you? Well, you'll pay me for his keep *before* you'll have him back! I shall 'old him for board and lodging. There! He can work."

She looked from Pippin to Mrs. Crimmins and then at the young lady who came forward.

"Who's going to pay?" she inquired, nodding the vivid poppy of her small black hat.

"Sally," said her mother, "what's got into yer?"

"Never you mind about that, Mother. Have n't

I been imposed on? Have *you* done right? You got me to take this boy. It was to help yourself get in a lodger too! And what happens? A week and more passes and I gets nothin' but sauce from you on a picture postcard. What about Bertie an' Arthur's money, too? Now, Mother, where you frittering away your wages?"

"Come downstairs, Sally," Mrs. Crimmins said coaxingly, tugging at Sally's beaded mantle.

Sally was difficult in her quiet way.

"May I suggest," interposed Miss Lawrence, "that little Hal is left here. Then Pippin or I will see, Miss Crimmins, that you get —"

"I'm Mrs. Taylor by name," broke in Sally.

Leonora rose.

"One of us will see to it, Mrs. Taylor, that you receive the money for the little boy's —"

"Look here," Sally said, moving quickly toward Leonora. "Do *you* guarantee me the money, ma'am?"

Behind Sally, Mrs. Crimmins gyrated frantically; wildly nodding and tugging Pippin's arm.

"You guarantee it," Sally went on, "and it's awright; I takes him back to the country."

"Yes," Leonora said, grasping what the caretaker signaled. "I will promise to pay the money — if Pippin does n't. Of course you understand she's not able to pay you just now, but soon — I'm sure —"

"Awright," Sally said cheerfully. "*You're a lady!*" Her glance round apparently met with disappointment of finding any others.

"The boy's better off in the country," she said shortly. "If I'm not imposed on, *I'm* willing enough to take 'im back!"

"Oh, yes, Pippin. I fair loves the country," Hal piped, swinging Sally's hand.

"'E's lookin' simply grand too," Mrs. Crimmins observed hurriedly.

"I'd never thort it," Pippin joyously agreed; "ain't 'e dossy in 'is new togs an' my eye what 'e's gained in weight too!"

He caught her round the neck as she took him up and after a long embrace scrambled down and went back to Sally.

"I *said* Pippin 'd mike it right, an' I should be goin' back," he bragged. "Now we've to get the marchpane for Bertie an' Arthur."

"Come downstairs, Sally," invited Mrs. Crimmins; "you'll 'ave tea an' I've got su'think for you, too."

"Hal could stop 'ere with his sister, till Aunt Sally is ready to go," ventured Pippin, "then she'll come up for him, see?"

Mrs. Taylor agreed with: "Mind your manners, Hal," and bustled out.

Leonora began searching in her bag for pennies; there weren't many there and she needed

them, but she recklessly bestowed two upon the little visitor.

"Oh, thank *you*, Miss," he chuckled, "I jolly well wanted some coppers to fetch su'think I'd promised the other chaps."

"Does Hal like Aunt Sally?" Leonora smiled, lifting him to her lap.

"Ra-ther, Miss, I like Aunt Sally most in the world next old Pippin!"

"Let's 'ave it all," Pippin knelt on the floor beside them. "Tell us everything!"

"It's the 'ugest inn ever," he related, wide-eyed. "Uncle Taylor says it's been known to accommodate six guests of a night! It seats ten to a cold supper, or meat tea at eighteen pence a 'ead, beer extra. The stable's got four 'orses and two carts to let out, and there's a garden wiv things growing in it!"

He smiled, showing two teeth missing. "Uncle Taylor s'ys as 'ow I'm a 'andy little kipper and can stop long as I like! Aunt Sally 'ushes 'im up, but he only larfs at 'er!" Hal looked into the young lady's face and chuckled mirthfully. His eyes were slyly mischievous.

"I shall tell you su'think!" He announced. "I've got three an' sixpence put by in a bank on the shelf in the kitchen at the inn!"

"Lovely!" Pippin cried, beaming.

"Sh!" warned the boy, eying the door. "Tell-

ing is not mindin' me manners! That's what Aunt Sally meant —"

Pippin and Miss Lawrence exchanged glances.

"'Ow'd you get the money?" Pippin asked, a little anxiously.

"Tips," he said. "Everybody tips me, comes to the inn. I blacks boots. I 'old a 'orse outside for a gentleman, or I tikes out a mug of ale. I've enough to keep me goin', I promise yer! I gets more tips 'n the other chaps. I mean to buy Pippin a frock some d'y!"

Pippin pressed her face against the little legs. He squealed and banged her head and kicked her playfully with his stout new boots.

"Ho," he laughed; "some d'y I'll be a inn-keeper an' then —!"

He broke off and looked at Leonora.

"Who's 'er, Pippin?" he asked.

"The lady is Miss Lawrence, duckie," Pippin said.

"Does she know Dad?"

Pippin got up uneasily.

"Now you've been told about arskin' questions, old chap," she said.

"I only 'oped Miss Lawrence did n't know 'im, is all," he told her quickly. He had looked round the room and discovering the pictures over the mantelshelf, pointed them out to Leonora.

"'E spent 'alf 'is time carryin' *them* round to

Solomon's, Pippin always 'aving to sive up an' fetch 'em out. One d'y we run off —"

The rustle of Sally Taylor's skirts was heard in the hall.

"We 've some shoppin' to do an' to get back to the inn by 'alf after six," stated Hal, slipping to the floor. He chuckled again and whispered, "I promised Uncle Taylor I'd come back. Uncle Taylor larfed and said, 'Rather! 'E'd wager it!'"

Sally entered, looking brighter.

"'E's enjoyed visitin' 'is sister an' the lady, I know," she said. "You'll excuse me, Miss," she addressed Leonora exclusively, "but Mother's got a silly streak, and I have to curb it constantly, no disrespect to her!"

The visitor's haste spared Leonora the embarrassment of reply. She followed to the door and shook hands with Mrs. Taylor who, giving assurance of the boy's welfare, led him away. His sister went to escort them out of the Court.

When Pippin came back, Miss Lawrence was preparing to go out.

"I'm sure Mrs. Taylor will be patient, Pippin!" she said. "We need not worry about that."

"Thank you, Miss," Pippin said.

"And Hal is a little man!"

"Thank you, Miss!" glowingly.

"And now I'm going out, Pippin."



"Yes, Miss."

Leonora looked round.

Pippin's manner was shy, shamed. Her face pale, full of remorse. She was eager with gratitude, but inarticulate, mute.

"I'll be back for tea!" Leonora said at the door.

"Thank Gawd, Miss," said Pippin, her prayer more widely meant than seemed.

## CHAPTER XI



HE little bride who was starting life so luxuriously with two whole rooms and an extravagant disregard of the usefulness of excelsior, had taken a fancy to Pippin and Pippin liked the little bride.

Their brief greetings as they met on the landing had been gradually prolonged to more neighborly chats. And Pippin had tipped the little lady off about the excelsior.

"Save your excelsior, me dear," she urged. "The next bit that comes wrapped round a stick o' new furniture you keep to stuff a pillow, see?"

"There'll be no more new sticks," the young wife answered; "not for a good while. We're putting by now, y' know."

She looked very happy as she told Pippin. She was much absorbed in herself and her husband and her pretty rooms.

"I want you to come in and see me," she said. "Come in any afternoon for tea."

"Some d'y," Pippin accepted politely, "I'd be pleased to call."

Now that she some day too might be a young married lady, the happy domesticity of others was beginning to interest her. She had told Leonora of their neighbor. And in spare moments Pippin was doing a little fine sewing, just out of friendliness. She loved it. It soothed after a weary, vain search for work.

She had not heard from Dandy since he promised to find her something — only a few days before, truly, but the time seemed long. She had tried everything! Sight of her started, it seemed, each possibly prospective employer, in no matter what line, clamoring for her character. All this, it was, that had caused her downfall and betrayed her to Miss Lawrence. Memory of that day could not be effaced. She counted up the days she had spent in search for work. They were twelve, and she had earned nothing, except indeed the half-crown dropped to her ready little palm, by a mighty dowager from her fashionable equipage, for Pippin's timely rescue from the curb, of a long white glove. She yearned for patience and new courage. She prayed for good fortune to befall Miss Lawrence. Her lady's troubled face disturbed Pippin. She set out each day, now, but languidly, much less hopefully.

Teddy chirped in his patch of sunshine and playfully showered his seeds on Pippin's work.

"Like the lady flutist, yer are!" she said;

"haunting folks with what you 've got, an' they 've not."

The accustomed step of Miss Lawrence was heard in the hall and Pippin sprang up.

"Miss!" she cried as the door opened.

Her gaze was unknowingly expectant.

Leonora came in. There was a flush on her pale cheeks. She leaned against the door as she closed it.

"You expect good news," she said, a little quiver in her voice.

"Oh, not that, Miss!" Pippin said quickly; "why should I? or—" she added, uncertain of the most tactful way to put it,—“or again, why *should n't* you 'ave?"

"I ought to have good news," Leonora said. "An offer was just made me at Hart and Logan's dramatic agency. But—I could n't bring myself to wear tights. I refused!"

Pippin gaped, her mouth opened in wonder.

"The offer was to go *en tour* with 'The Traveling Tinies Extravaganza Company.' The salary was to have been four pounds a week." Leonora stated it all succinctly.

She had never seemed so weary and without hope.

"You s'y you give up a chanct at four quid a week, Miss?" Pippin prayed to be told again.

"You see," Leonora said patiently, "you wear

tights in such plays; not dresses, tights! I mean —”

“I knows, Miss,” Pippin said.

She had seen extravaganzas, from sixpenny seats in the gallery, with Doll.

“I knows tights. They’s pink things fittin’ like a glove and nothink else.” Her eyes glowed.

She seemed to think the costume all right.

“I could n’t do it, Pippin. That is not the kind of actress I am.”

Miss Lawrence went to the chair near the window and sat down, weakly. Pippin betrayed her amazement and disapproval of the enormous sum of money having been allowed to escape. The necessity for action set her to dusting again. She finally drew up beside Leonora.

“Four quid, I will s’y, do seem a lot o’ money, Miss, but no doubt you feels su’tthink about the extravacancie as I do about charin’. You’d rather be dead; though I must s’y I can’t get any charin’ to do with all I’ve tried!”

“Perhaps I’m foolish,” Miss Lawrence admitted.

Her pretty face looked strained and desperate.

“But,” reconsidered Pippin, forgetting the money, “you can’t go ’opping about without a frock on, like a common person —” she gazed at Miss Lawrence thoughtfully. “There, you’ve a letter in your ’and, too, you’ve not even opened.”

The letter was Charlie Browne's. Leonora had got it from the theater but her mind would trail back to the offer she had refused. Every step of the return to Jubilee Court had tortured her. She was no doubt flying in the face of Fate. Here was another experience offered, perhaps to increase her knowledge of life and enlarge her sphere for acting, besides food and the release of her clothes from Bloomsbury Square. She could help Pippin, too. The girl was entitled to her consideration. Leonora would have been Captain of the Band in the Extravaganza. They wanted a blonde Captain. She had admitted she danced a little. They said her looks "would do!"

After all if she *was* born to start her career on her looks —

"Read your letter, Miss!" The voice of Pippin came from the other end of the room.

She was sewing again. Her features were as gentle as a summer sea. Leonora felt suddenly comforted. The girl had understood. After all the next few days must bring some kind of part. Anything only not tights!

She opened Charlie Browne's letter. She read a few lines and called out sharply:

"Oh! Oh, merciful goodness, what shall I do?"

In two bounds Pippin was at her side.

"What is 'urting you, Miss? Is it your 'ead?"

Miss Lawrence was holding her head with both hands. Pippin hurried to remove the pink hat.

"Oh," Leonora cried again.

She looked up wildly. She caught the letter and poured over it.

"Saturday, when is Saturday?"

"This is a Thursday," Pippin said. "To-morrow's Friday an' the next is Saturday. I s'y, Miss, is *he* coming — Mr. Browne?"

"No," Miss Lawrence said. "Some people from Goshen, Indiana, will be in London Saturday. I can't see them!"

"What?" exclaimed Pippin.

"I can't see them!" repeated Leonora. "It's impossible! I can't see them —"

She looked at the letter again.

"But they are in London now, it seems. Yes, they must be. They were due yesterday, Wednesday! I am to see them at the Savoy Hotel —" she dropped the letter and looked hopelessly at Pippin.

"At the Savoy?" repeated Pippin.

"Yes. They are to send me another note and say what time, but they got Mr. Browne to say in his letter they positively will expect me to meet them at the Savoy, Saturday afternoon. They are going on to Paris that night."

Pippin stood blinking and thinking.

"I can't go!" moaned Miss Lawrence. "Why, the Clarks are the very best people in Goshen."

"But, Miss," Pippin said musingly, "you've simply got to. *Would* you 'ave these toffs askin' of each other, 'What's Miss Lawrence 'iding for?'"

She gave an imitation of a toff's manner of speech.

"Toffs, Miss, always 'as their suspicions!"

"What are toffs?" Leonora asked impatiently.

"Swells!" explained Pippin. "Dossy folks. Them with sharp eyes as s'ys to a pore honest gal, 'Where's your character, gal? Can you expect a situation without a character!'"

"The Clarks are n't that kind, Pippin," Leonora said.

"But you are right," she admitted a moment later. "They would wonder why I did not see them. It would get all round Goshen, too, and Mr. Browne would wonder—I could cry!"

She rose, pacing the floor, holding her head.

In her turn Pippin spoke up sharply.

"That's no good, Miss; only fags you out. Just lie down for a bit—then see!"

More meekly, Leonora stopped beside the bed.

"I don't see how I can go in that old rag," she fretted, as Pippin hung her pink dress over the back of the chair.

"Now, just you lie down," Pippin urged; "things will look different when you've rested, I know!"



"I don't wish to lie down and I can't rest," rebelled Leonora.

But when Pippin drew the shade and the canary's piping was hushed, she did lie down. Pippin sat down again, but she did not sew. The work lay in her lap.

Her eyes were narrowed, her brow drawn darkly. Something that had been crowded to the background of her mind came vividly before her now—the clothes left at Mrs. Penley's in Bloomsbury Square! Presently Miss Lawrence, if not asleep, was at least unaware of Pippin's movements. Glancing at the bed, she got up noiselessly and went to the chest. Among the possessions in the top drawer, were three small keys on a ring. She slipped them into her pocket and closed the drawer, put on her hat and quietly left the room.

She walked slowly along the crowded streets, her mind working busily. Somehow she must get Miss Lawrence her clothes. One scheme after another came to her only to be rejected. Then an idea alluringly simple; the more she thought of it the greater her approval. There would be some risk. Yes, but not so much and she determined to take it, hoping, too, that Fate might favor her in this plan. She loitered along and it was nearly dark when she finally reached Bloomsbury Square. Darkness was a part of the plan.

Mrs. Penley's lodging-house was alight. Figures appeared against the window blinds.

The ground-floor window was open to view and within Pippin saw two ladies dressed to go out, no doubt the Americans to whom she had listened upon her previous visit here. The street door opened, a white-capped housemaid came out with metal whistle and blew for a four-wheeler. A cab quickly clattered up and the two ladies came out. The driver was directed to the Duke of York's theater.

"We're late all right," one of them said. "It took you so long to make up your mind where we'd go, Elizabeth!"

Pippin smiled. The voice was so like another, now very sweetly familiar one. The women were driven away. The housemaid went in and closed the door. She at once appeared in the ground-floor room, looked about, ate something from a box on the table and finally turned out the light. Then she went out and closed the door. Pippin looked over the railing into the area. The door there was closed. She went back into the shadow. The street-door opened again and a man came out, smoking. He went away out of the street. Others emerged from the house, walking along in the soft evening to pick up a cab at leisure. At last the house seemed quiet. Lights were lowered.

Pippin again looked down into the area. The housemaid's cap was reflected on the curtain. She was moving round the kitchen. Presently she sat down, and from her shadow Pippin saw she was eating her supper. Pippin descended the steps and knocked upon the basement door. It was finally opened cautiously.

"Good evening," Pippin greeted brightly, but not too loud. "Is Mrs. Penley at 'ome?"

The housemaid looked hard at the visitor.

"She is." The reply was somewhat aggressive. "But she's lying down. She always does after her after-dinner cup o' coffee."

"Pity," the caller said; "I might 'ave come in the morning, but now I'm 'ere—"

"It'd be better to come in the morning," said the housemaid.

She had been up the stairs to the rooms above a great number of times that day, could Pippin but have known.

"I wonder," Pippin went on thoughtfully, "if you remember a young lady used to lodge 'ere—Miss Lawrence 'er name was."

The housemaid's face lighted up.

"'Ow well does I remember 'er—why this very comb I've got in my hair—" she turned her head to display it—"she gave to me the day she went."

"Indeed," marveled the visitor; "it suits you too."

"What about Miss Lawrence?" the housemaid asked.

"Why," said Pippin, "she left 'er box an' things 'ere."

The housemaid winked and looked back at the door, behind her. Pippin breathed quickly with satisfaction. The box must still be there.

"I came on an errand. But, you s'y Mrs. Penley is lying down—" she hesitated.

"I'll go an' tell the missus at once," said the maid. "No doubt she'll 'ave you upstairs immediately. Come in!"

"'Ave you to go up many flights?" inquired Pippin solicitously, stepping in.

"Only two. You stop 'ere."

"Take your time about it." Pippin closely followed the girl to the stairway. "Don't kill yourself over the steps. I fair 'ate stairs meself. I'll stop 'ere." She dropped to the lowest step, yawning.

The maid departed upward.

Pippin drew the keys from her pocket and partly closed the door leading from the kitchen; behind it here in the entry-way, had stood the precious trunk. The place was dark but a glimmer of light came through the crack of the partly closed door. She peered through the darkness and groped about. A larger trunk was there—yes, and the one she sought had been lifted upon it. She felt for the

lock. The second key she tried fitted and unlocked the trunk, yet some straps still held it. Her hands were bungling and unsteady, but at last she had unbuckled the straps, and raised the top. Her fingers fumbled eagerly over the contents. Only the lightest things seemed to be there. She gathered a handful and stuffed into her spacious pocket. A hat in the corner partition came under her fingers. She dropped it out upon the floor. She found a shoe, then another; a fan and a photograph which she clutched eagerly. Her pocket could accommodate them. Pippin's pockets had not been reformed yet. She had never thought of this. It came to her now, as well as the astonishing clumsiness of her hands. She grasped the side of the top tray, it lifted easily. Steps sounded. The girl was coming down the stairs, briskly. Flight? Not yet. She would take a chance. She opened the door that led to the kitchen, and hid behind it.

The housemaid descended, stopped at the foot of the stairs.

"You're to go right up," she said, hurrying into the kitchen. "Lor' bless us!" she exclaimed.

She paused, went to the outside door, stepped into the area. Then she came back. Pippin heard her walking all round the kitchen.

"I was n't gone a minute," she was saying. "She *could* 'a' waited. Very queer—"

She came back and began slowly mounting the

stairs. Pippin turned swiftly to the trunk. She pulled at the tray and from beneath it dragged some garments, dropped them out, replaced the tray, let down the lid and had secured the keys before the housemaid was heard returning with her mistress. Pippin grasped the hat and clothes from the floor, wadded them under her arm, curved into the kitchen and scuttled across to the door. She was too burdened to close it. Half-way up the steps she stumbled over a dragging garment, clung to her load and her chin collided with the pavement, cruelly. Undaunted she rose, something fell from her bulging pocket and rolled back into the areaway, a shoe she realized regretfully. But excited voices were below her then.

"Phœbe!" It must have been Mrs. Penley speaking, "Phœbe, here's somebody just gone out of my kitchen making off up the street. Why here's a shoe fell down."

Pippin ran, swiftly, silently.

"Stop thief!" The faint cry of Phœbe the housemaid was wafted upon the air.

The night was calm, there was nobody about, certainly not an officer. There was no need for prolonged speed. There was need to take stock of her spoil and to gather it up more safely. A little alley, a dark doorway was at hand. Pippin slipped in. When she emerged her appearance was greatly changed. The skirts she had put on

would have trailed but she gathered them up. Her hat was a cornflower blue entwined in a mesh of tulle. The brim flopped. Her own fur cap was under her arm. Strange enlargements bulged over parts of her person. Out of consideration for the clothing she took her way back slowly. Her appearance did not pass unnoticed and in Shaftsbury Avenue she encountered three rowdy girls. They broke apart shrieking with one accord and leaped into a devilish dance that wedged her in and impeded her progress.

"Misfits!" shrilled one lady, holding up her own skirts as she hopped about.

"'And me downs," echoed her comrade whose bun was shaken loose.

"G' on!" branched out the third. "Don't yer know a loidy when you sees one? And did n't yer know about the ball at the Palace to-noit?"

"King Edward's not in Lunnon!" objected the other; "'owever, she's no doubt going to a private affair in Park Lane, what?"

They felt of the stuff in her skirt. She kicked at one of them. They laughed joyously. But a fair, pretty young girl with a basket on her arm empty of all but a few dried flowers, came along and stopped. Pippin caught her eye imploringly.

"I s'y, Liz," the flower girl said to one of the tormentors, "yer back 'air is all tumbling down, you *do* look rummy? What's the row?"

Liz put her hand to her hair, turned to the newcomer and in that instant Pippin skimmed along the curb and was gone. Laughter and hoots of derision followed her but she was lost to them.

Much later, worn and weary, she neared Jubilee Court. The houses of the private square it led into were many of them closed and along here she could take off the extra clothes, roll them up and so slip them into her room. Miss Lawrence was not to know of her windfall until the moment arrived to prepare for the occasion.

Pippin was proud of her achievement. She had been daring, she had been lucky. The lady in whom she centered her hopes and ambitions, who had done so much for her, should not go forth in shabby attire for the swells of Goshen, Indiana, to behold. The square was very quiet. The shadow of a tree gave friendly shelter. She paused and looked all round, then slipped off the outer garments, folded them neatly and exchanged the blue cornflower hat for her cap. She sighed. She was very tired and hungry. Her head felt suddenly dull. With the things tucked under her arm, she was ready. But from the dark doorway of a closed house across the road a figure had moved. It was crossing over to her and suddenly came into the ray of light from the street lamp. It was Doll.

"If an officer saw what I just 'ave seen, the



magistrate would n't let you off with a caution, Pip, old gal!" she laughed.

"Doll!" gasped Pippin.

"The sime. 'Ow 's your ladyship?"

"Been on a errand," Pippin answered, drawing back as Doll came close, peering at the bundle.

Doll laughed! The square rang with her yells of mirth and echoed into the quiet court. Pippin scowled at her.

"Don't be a fool, a bally 'owling barmy idiot, Doll! That 's all I asks."

Doll sobered a little.

"I must n't mike a row, 's'truth," she said. "My 'Arry 's about 'ere, gettin' the lay of the land. 'E and a pal 's got their eyes on a certain 'ouse where a top window 's been left unboarded."

She chuckled and nudged Pippin. "I s'y, why don't you drop in any more? Kitty 's not well and asks for yer. I 'd a bad 'eart flutter once or twice lately. 'Arry near called round for you too!"

Pippin shuddered at the thought of Harry. It was not easy now that the time had come, to tell Doll.

"It 's 'ere," she finally said uneasily. "I 've dropped all that."

"Wotcher mean?" Doll was dull.

"I 've turned honest," Pippin said. "I 'm going straight!"

Doll laughed louder than ever.

"I'd like to knock off your silly, noisy old nut!" Pippin growled. "What is there to larf at?"

"Wait till I tells it to Kitty," jibed Doll. "Old Pip—little old Pip,' Kitty will s'y. 'The cleverest young pickpocket about the West End, not pinched, no, no; but — *turned str'ight!*'"

Doll's laughter could not be hushed. It turned Pippin cold and dizzy. Possibly her words had echoed into the Court, up to the very room.

"Doll, old gal," she said, "'ush and I'll come round to see you an' explain. There's a dear now, do 'ush!"

"Turned str'ight," Doll pointed at the bundle Pippin clutched. "Well, when yer comin'?" she questioned hysterically. "Soon? Kitty can't wait, not she, after this news. I'm like to 'ave another 'cart fit, too!"

"Soon," promised Pippin. "Good-night!"

"Not so fast," Doll waylaid her. "Who's your lady-pal?"

"When I come round to call," Pippin said, "is the time for all this. Look sharp now or I smashes yer one."

Doll gave way. Pippin's violence was unusual.

"We'll look for you soon," Doll said.

As Pippin left her she called after her mirthfully. "I see 'ow it is. You was turnin' when tikin' off those fine togs, 'ere in the dark."

Strange, thought Pippin, how hideous laughter could sound.

Breathless and half sobbing she came to the house and hurried up the stairs. She listened outside the door. It was quiet. She went in.

"Pippin?" Leonora turned from the window.

"Miss, all in darkness?" She swept to the curtains and dropped her bundle behind them upon her bunk. She emptied her pocket quickly.

"The candle is very low; anyhow, there's a new moon to-night," Miss Lawrence said. "I saw it over my right shoulder, out over the Square."

"When, Miss?" Pippin gasped.

"Half an hour ago," was the answer. "Have you had any good luck, Pippin?"

"Thank you, Miss, but nothink very certain. Now for a bite to eat. I 'ave been long out."

"Pippin!"

"Miss?"

"I went back about the Traveling Tinies Extravaganza offer. The chance was gone. Some one else had just taken it!"

"Thank 'Eaven for su'think then!" Pippin exclaimed.

"Why, Pippin, four pounds—" but Miss Lawrence's voice was less troubled.

"Four pounds is not so much, Miss!" Pippin said sturdily. "I'm parched for me tea!"

## CHAPTER XII



HERE had been rain all night, and the rumble of thunder. Pippin was awakened by it and sat up to peer out of her own private chamber. Miss Lawrence stood at the window, with arms outstretched, palms upturned to the rain.

"If it still rains to-morrow," she answered at Pippin's call, "I can't go to the Savoy. Still, that is n't any comfort. When it rains people go in cabs and keep their engagements. Cabs cost —"

"'S'truth!" Pippin answered, and then the thud of her discouraged little body falling backward in her excelsior bed.

Pippin opened her eyes after this awful realization and strained them owlshly in the darkness. Against the inside of the curtains that partitioned her off was carefully pinned her recent plunder. She could detect the outline of the blue cornflower hat upon the curtain. The photograph which had turned out to be that of Leonora Lawrence in costume, was under her pillow. After all her effort, was she to be denied the satisfaction of sending Miss Lawrence forth to meet this social obligation?

But cab-fare from Jubilee Court to the Hotel Savoy!

"Did you groan, Pippin?" inquired Miss Lawrence. "You must not take my afflictions too much to heart. If it comes to the worst, you may wear my hat to the Savoy to tell the Clarks I never go out in London when it rains."

This feeble jest greatly diverted Pippin and soon after requesting Miss Lawrence to return to bed before she got her death, quiet settled upon the room.

And after all the morning broke auspiciously. The ray of sunlight slanted over Teddy's cage and the pink rose of the wall-paper. The little court had been rain-washed and was fresh as a daisy. Leonora dressed as usual in her pink frock to go forth on her daily quest. She had become quite reconciled to visiting the dramatic agencies now. She even conversed with some she met there, as Pippin did with the young bride below stairs. She was glad of the exchange of hopeful words. She had got encouragement there too. One little woman had said savagely:

"Don't be an underdog! I've got a baby and Freddie does n't have awfully good luck lately, so I take just anything. I can't wait around but if I were starting out again, young—"

She had opened her arms and thrown back her head with a little cry. Her bosom quivered, her

lowered lashes hid the glance she threw Freddy — it was Freddy who sat near, among the other men; Freddy, a comedy man, fat, merry, pink and untroubled.

“Ah,” sighed Freddy’s wife, “don’t you be a fool, child. You are made for leads. You are full of temperament. You are *young*, beautiful — free, not that I’d give up my baby — I say, have you seen Toby Hamilton, by any chance?”

Leonora told her of the interview with the manager and the little woman had thought something might come of it. Leonora was always encouraged by these talks.

She was pinning on her hat when Pippin spoke anxiously.

“You’ll come back ’ere, in course, Miss, before you goes to the tea at the Savoy?” she urged. “You’ll want to doss up a bit!”

“Oh, yes, Pippin! I must come back to — well, not change my frock or anything so fastidious,” answered Leonora bitterly, as she spread out her arms and looked at herself in the mirror. “I will come back though to do my hair some other way and —”

“I’ll give your shoes a bit o’ blackin’!” added Pippin cheerily. “Mrs. Crimmins ’as plenty o’ that.”

Leonora had just reached the door when a heavy knock fell upon it. Two burly men were there.

"Come for the wardrobe!" said one.

"Wardrobe!" chorused Pippin and Miss Lawrence.

"Wardrobe!"

Miss Lawrence and Pippin exchanged glances.

"It's *sold* to me!" one of the men explained.

"I was up 'ere lookin' it over three weeks ago — afore this room was let. I offered the Missus — well, a certain amount for it which she would n't take. Now she's glad to let it go for less. I've paid 'er, too. She's got the money. I'm a sec-and-'and dealer!"

He pushed into the room quite easily and looked all the furniture over with a covetous eye. Then he espied the article he claimed to have bought and motioned to his companion. This man said:

"We'll tike the things out of it, first. The lady will want 'er clo'—"

"It's empty," Leonora murmured.

"We don't use it," added Pippin.

"That's what I understood," the second-hand dealer said. "'Ave a 'old, Tom!"

They shut it up and carried it out. Leonora closed the door upon them. It was all done in a minute.

"Funny thing," Pippin said musingly. "I quite forgot Mrs. Crimmins telling me when I came in 'ere the sticks, being 'er own, was extra and 'ow if she got 'ard pressed, she must sell 'em!"

Miss Lawrence looked at the chest of drawers and then the bed.

"Never fear!" cheered Pippin. "She won't go selling *them*. I'm going down for a word with 'er, too! I *want* to see 'er. Now we've more room to get about, Miss, what? without that bally thing we'd no use for!"

"Yes," admitted Miss Lawrence, "there's more room."

She turned and was on the point of asking a question but the gayest trills of song coming unexpectedly from Pippin, frustrated her completely. It was factitious lightheartedness, she knew, but she did not ask the question,—about the rent.

The song hushed abruptly as it had begun and left alone, Pippin's face quickly changed.

"A perfec' snake in the grass Mrs. Crimmins is," she muttered. "It'll be the same thing again to-morrow, no doubt. Then with the furniture all sold, *we* 'll 'ave to get out."

Something must be done. She must have the money for the rent and for little Hal. There came remembrance of her successful coup of the day before, the getting of Miss Lawrence's clothes.

Then what was that Doll had said—"the cleverest little pickpocket in the West End"—"never been caught!" The pride she had once felt in her accomplishment glowed insidiously. This and the urgent need of money shut out all else. In sudden



determination she parted the curtains that partitioned off her private corner, unpinned the clothes and brought them out. There was a frock complete. She had found the bodice in the tray and the skirt in the bottom of the trunk. She thought again of her success. It had been dark and how her fingers had trembled.

"'S'truth!" she exclaimed with a choky little chuckle.

She spread the frock upon the bed. It was white with a faint blue flower in it. There was another garment which she took for a frock too; it was blue, but very plain, except for a lace frill at the bottom. She placed it beside the other. The young lady could choose. There were other things. She fingered the lace and fine muslin lovingly. There was only one slipper. She laughed a little as she thought of the fate of the other.

How the housemaid had yelled, "Stop thief!"

And how she had run! Her eyes widened darkly. The absolute success of the thing thrilled her anew. She arranged the clothes on the bed, where the first glance would show them. Miss Lawrence would think — Perspicaciously Pippin decided Miss Lawrence would be too overwhelmed to think. She would just doss out hurriedly and go. Afterward — Pippin did not go into the matter further. She caught up her fur cap, glancing with delight at the cornflower hat the bedpost

was wearing temporarily. It seemed to have caught the sly eye of Teddy too; he was chirping madly, inspired to a song of cornflowers. Pippin swaggered to the door.

If she should meet Mrs. Crimmins on the stairs!

"'Old 'ard!" she said to herself, waving her fist. "I'll see you get your p'y, Mrs. Crimmins; I'm going for it — now!"

She banged the door and ran downstairs. She walked very determinedly and her quick, easy stride presently brought her to Bond Street. Bond Street was very pleasant on a nice morning and there were many shoppers along here to-day. Pippin had in mind a certain Parisian jeweler's window that usually drew a small select crowd and she sauntered toward it. She had not gone far when a vision in heliotrope and black lace, with a clash of bangles and chatelaine, a swish of soft petticoats and the plentiful scent of violet sachet came from a side street. The lady turned into Bond Street and walked ahead of Pippin. She followed eagerly, a little excitedly. Her footfall was lighter, her eyes alert, watching for opportunity. They came to the jeweler's window. There was a crowd there and the lady pushed in ahead. Pippin followed, on her face a look of fear mingled with hard determination.

Of a sudden she lurched forward, her out-

stretched hands coming in violent contact with them, sent the lady's golden perquisites clashing, scattering upon the pavement and Pippin with them. Quickly she half rose upon hands and knees, one hand deftly covered the sovereign purse, all but closed upon it, then shot back, clutching at her throat. Her eyes stared, fastened upon something pink, a woman's dress skirt it was — her eyes traveled up, up — No! Miss Lawrence, it was not! She cowed a moment, the terror passing, she darted a fearful look at the woman who stooped to help her. Then with effort she bent down.

"They're all 'ere, ma'am," she mumbled, dry mouthed; and gropingly collecting the trinkets, handed them back to the owner.

"Are you hurt, child?" inquired the lady.

"No, ma'am, not 'urt; I'm not 'urt!" Pippin said, and she tore from the crowd. "I'm not 'urt — I'm honest, that's all!" she was whispering to herself.

In a daze she made her way slowly. She tried to realize what had happened. She had tried to steal and could n't — it was a miracle.

"It's Miss!" she said, her teeth chattering. "She was n't about at all — yet she was. Oh, I could n't! You see I could n't, no matter what comes! I tried and I could n't — steal! I saw Miss — when she was n't there!"

She carried her cap that had fallen off and dabbed

at her face with the fur. Tears had sprung to her eyes and trickled down her cheeks, tears of relief they were and brought a sense of comfort. She must plan differently. She must go to Mrs. Crimmins about the rent.

Mrs. Crimmins could have put them out of Jubilee Court! And she had not. She had only sold the useless wardrobe they had had nothing to put into.

"I called 'er a snake in the grass!" she repented, "an' she so jolly decent to us all along, too!"

The sun was very hot after the rain, and black spots popped in and out of the air before her. She thought of the last encounter with Doll, and stopped, uncertain which way to the Court would be safest from another meeting. Then dully at first came into her mind a new thought. It brought her to a standstill.

"But Miss needed the clothes!" she exclaimed.

But she stood quite still for it had become fearfully clear to her that in purloining the clothes from Bloomsbury Square she had not done an honorable thing. She would have Miss Lawrence to reckon with.

"It's all along o' me thievin' w'y," she told herself, moving on slowly, sadly.

Jubilee Court was reached at last. Ahead she saw a fat man coming slowly toward her. He turned abruptly and walked in the opposite direc-

tion. There was something about him that seemed familiar. He walked very fast.

Pippin entered the house and hurried to Mrs. Crimmins's door. She knocked softly.

"Come in," said the caretaker. She was at a table, busy over a letter.

"It's only me," Pippin said. "I've come about the rent."

Mrs. Crimmins's face lighted quickly.

"I'm sorry not to 'ave it," Pippin said, "expectin' it as we are —"

Mrs. Crimmins frowned, and nibbling the point of her pencil, looked down at her letter.

"I'm puttin' Sally off for a few d'ys," she said; "at least I'm 'oping to."

Pippin came closer.

"Sally might fetch my little nipper back, Mrs. Crimmins."

Mrs. Crimmins mopped her face with a large handkerchief. She wore a black silk dress a little frayed and a coquettish touch of lavender ribbon at her neck.

"The agent called to-day," she said. "It's the first time I've ever been obliged to s'y I was behind in a lodger."

"All I asks, Mrs. Crimmins, is a few more days," Pippin leaned forward and touched the plump shoulder earnestly. "An' I asks it for — Miss Lawrence."

Mrs. Crimmins shook her head, dismally.

"We all get our just deserts," she said, "an' that American will get 'is!"

"Well," Pippin answered, pondering, "it seems to me, we all 'as our little lot o' trouble one way and another an' so if it *is* in the shape of a man, why we 'd do quite as well to mike the best of it; becorse 'ave it we will!"

Mrs. Crimmins unexpectedly brightened.

"Perhaps that 's so," she said. "Or you might say we all get our just deserts; and if the first 'un was trouble, the second might be a comfort and so a just desert, after the first—what? Well," the caretaker burst into confidence, "I 'm goin' to 'ave my just deserts. 'E's a cobbler by trade. I 've been lending him me savings, and 'e's invested in a *certain* thing."

Pippin backed off, opened her arms and, swooping down upon Mrs. Crimmins, embraced her heartily.

"Sally, of course, won't 'ear of it!" the lady said when she was freed. "Sally keeps such a damper on me spirits. I 've most a mind to run aw'y!"

"Never do it!" Pippin perched thoughtfully upon the edge of the table. "Send for 'er, she can't mike a row, if you mike one first."

She slid back to the floor.

"Write Sally. When she comes, begin at once an' 'ave it over."

Sally's mother possibly saw the advisability of this, but it hardly seemed an alluring prospect.

"I sold the wardrobe," she announced suddenly. "I needed a bit of ready money."

"It *was* a surprise, like, but no matter — we did n't need it," returned Pippin.

"Now about the rent, I've put the agent off four d'ys more. I can't give you more than that," she stated sternly, "and no doubt by then —"

"I'll tell Miss Lawrence," Pippin said uncertainly. "I'll tell 'er you give us four d'ys."

"I can't say fairer," regretted the caretaker.

A tap, cautious and low, came to the door.

"Ah," simpered Mrs. Crimmins, "'e's come. 'E will 'ave me out to Battersea Park with 'im to-d'y, Saturd'y being early closing."

She opened the door, admitting the same stout person Pippin had previously noticed in the Court. He started slightly upon seeing her but Mrs. Crimmins quickly reassured him.

"Miles," she said, "shake 'ands with one of me lodgers; Raymond's the name. I'll get my hat," and she hurried into the next little room.

"Miles!" Pippin said as they shook hands. "Well, upon me word!"

The smile faded from the beaming face of Miles. But quickly the lodger put him at ease.

"Don't mind me, Mr. Miles. I don't tell every-

think I see, even to Dandy. When the weddin's a-coming off, is time enough to speak of it to him, an' you 're the one to do it!"

The face of Cobbler Miles slipped back into its merry creases.

"I shan't split!" Pippin said. "One good turn deserves another an' you did me shoe, did n't you? Though after all, why should Dandy mind your having another missus?"

Mrs. Crimmins swiftly returning, Pippin wished them a pleasant walk and slipped away.

She climbed to her room wearily. Four days more! The pink frock and hat lay upon the bed. Miss Lawrence had worn both the blue and white frocks! For a few puzzling moments her greater troubles were put aside while she thought of this eccentricity. Suddenly it came to her and how fortunate! The blue was a lining to the white and matched the blue flower in the frock.

She turned and met the eyes of Charles Browne looking at her from his photograph.

"Ho," she accused sharply. "Yer *loves* 'er, does you? Very good — *very* good indeed, sir!"

Revengefully she thought of the Earl who had never turned up.

There was writing material there beside the picture. She took it to the table, sat down and began a letter.



"Respected Sir," she wrote. Further composition came slowly. She munched her penholder and patiently awaited inspiration.

I am maid to Miss Leonora Lawrence the actriss. Your picture is on our chest of drawers, so I fancy you are a frend of hers so ought to know she's not herself looks seedy acts strang. She has not much money. We are stoping in Jubilee Court. A frend in need is a frend indede and so she might be glad to see you if you was here.

VICTORIA ALEXANDRA RAYMOND.

Putney bus drops you off in Fulham Road near Court.

She read the letter over carefully. She sighed, the days ahead stretched out endlessly. The letter must go to America and Mr. Browne must come — if he was coming. It would take, she did not know how long. But she sealed and addressed the envelope to Mr. Brown at "Goshen, Indiana," with careful precision.

She took it out, spent a precious penny for a stamp and posted the letter.

## CHAPTER XIII



RS. CALVIN CLARK and her daughter, Elvira, had come to Europe from Goshen, Indiana, with a great deal of money to spend. In Goshen the Clarks' wealth was estimated to be nearly a million dollars, yet they had never visited Europe before.

The tea-room of the Savoy was crowded. Mrs. Clark looked about, her longnons aiding the desired effect of cool haughtiness the simple unworldly woman desired to affect. Elvira Clark studied the tea-card.

"I'm hungry, Mother," she finally said.

"Well, Elvira," the mother returned, "we're just having tea now. They don't eat a great lot of stuff at tea time over here. Now don't show up countrified when Molly comes."

"She's late," Elvira complained. "She was to come at five."

"I'm longing to see her," Mrs. Clark said. "Maybe you'd better get up and kind of look round, Elvira."

"Oh, Mother, I told her in my note just where,

in this corner of the room. Don't you s'pose *she* knows the Savoy?"

"She's probably at a rehearsal or something," Mrs. Clark decided. "We must n't call her Molly, either; she might get mad. Leonora will be hard, but try to remember it, Elvira."

At that moment Leonora was within ten minutes of her destination. It had been a long walk from Jubilee Court and she had taken it slowly to prevent an agitated or overheated appearance upon her arrival. She might have ridden part way, but it was hard to part with her last bit of money and she chose to spend one of her pennies upon a letter that she had written to Mr. Browne. It was a final letter.

Her cup of bitterness was full to the brim. She decided that there were to be no more compulsory interviews with people from home, no further risk of being discovered, a miserable failure; no more trying to fool Charlie about things. She had written him and arbitrarily stopped the correspondence.

She was very tired when she reached the Savoy. When at first she appeared in the tea-room, she stood somewhat dazed, looking round, trying to distinguish the faces and recall the corner Elvira had especially named in the note. Then she saw little Elvira Clark coming toward her.

"Darling," cried Elvira, seizing her hand, "how beautiful and pale and interesting you are. Have

you just come from a rehearsal; and are you all tired out?"

She drew her guest to their table where she was cordially embraced by Mrs. Clark.

"You dear child!" said the hostess. "How nice of you to come!"

"Is n't she stunning, Mother!" enthused Elvira. "We were just crazy to see you! Were n't we, Mother?"

A waiter drew a chair and Leonora sat down.

"You look tired, dear, but that interesting tired!" Elvira said, covering Leonora's hand with her own little plump one.

"Elvira would never get to look that way though," Mrs. Clark deplored. "She eats too much and sleeps too much."

Leonora laughed. Elvira looked very plump and wholesome to her. Mrs. Clark leaned embracingly close.

"I wish Elvira could do her hair like yours. My dear, she's worn her hair as it is now ever since she first put it up, three years ago," the mother murmured plaintively. Her daughter had become busy with the waiter.

"I'm sure she looks awfully nice," said Leonora.

"We just love this English tea-drinking business," Mrs. Clark went on, and Elvira broke in.

"Mother, I'm hungry. I'm going to order this

queer Monte Carlo thing. The waiter says it's made of eggs and something and that it's good."

The attendant emphasized his recommendation of the delicacy, adding,

"If one is hungry!"

"Probably Leonora's had no lunch, rehearsing all day. Sometimes they don't get any," Elvira said. "Bring that, waiter."

"I'm not really hungry," the guest murmured, yet feeling most disinclined for the beverage Pippin so persistently supplied her.

The words of her hostess were not unwelcome.

"Maybe you'd better eat, dear, even if it's not the fashion. You must keep up your strength. Charlie said you'd probably be rehearsing. Too bad about 'The Tenderfoot,' was n't it? Now say, dear," Mrs. Clark leaned nearer, "would you advise Elvira's trying to get on the stage over here? I s'pose you could n't help her?"

"Oh, Mother, there's time enough for me going on the stage. Anyhow I'm going to start at home." Elvira sat stroking Leonora's hand.

Her mother sank back.

"She'll never *go on the stage*," she said. "It's funny, out of five girls, not one of them to have *my* ambition. I *had* to marry, but they, why they could do anything with the money and all. Now, Elvira'll settle down there in Goshen just like the others, you see!"

Leonora smiled at Elvira. She had always liked her. She was a nice girl, with the attraction of health, contentment and knowing her own mind.

"We leave for Paris to-night," she told Leonora quickly, smiling in her sunny way. "Pa's going to meet us there, and Sidney Long. Remember Sid? He's gotten awfully tall."

Leonora did remember Sid.

"How I wish we could see you act," chirped Elvira. "Say, we're coming back to London to sail for home. Where'll you be playing?"

"When are you coming?" Leonora asked. "One can never be certain of anything in this profession. I may, you know, go *en tour* for a little."

"Well, say, you drop a line here to the Savoy for us about the middle of August," suggested Mrs. Clark. "Will you?"

Leonora promised. The waiter came. Elvira's hearty appetite was not unshared by Leonora while Mrs. Clark prattled on of her ambition for her daughter.

The color came back to Leonora's face.

"Where are you stopping, dear?" Mrs. Clark unexpectedly questioned.

"Oh," said Leonora, "I am stopping in a quaint little street in Chelsea. It's very quiet there and nice for study. It's not expensive and I was glad to find it."

"You're a wonderful girl," Mrs. Clark said enviously. "I think it was the most daring thing, your coming over here all alone as you did. None of my girls would have done it. Let's see, you're twenty, are n't you, Molly — Leonora, I mean? You're twenty and Elvira is eighteen. You've been over here — how long?"

Leonora sat up stiffly, one hand grasping her teaspoon, the other clinched in her lap. She was afraid if Mrs. Clark kept on she should betray herself! Then she thought weakly, after all, they were only two simple women, her own townspeople, good and generous; she swallowed hard; she had only to hint at her plight. . . .

She believed if the words did come out, that she should die. In this momentary battle between her weakness and her pride, and while Mrs. Clark prattled on, her eyes took vaguely in all the details of Elvira's dress, its costliness, its lack of style; she noticed the paradise feather on Mrs. Clark's hat.

What if Elvira and her mother knew how she was living! They would tell Mr. Clark and Sid Long, who was a friend of Charlie's. It would make a story worth telling.

Leonora looked down at her own dress. Pippin was a wonder. She must have gone to Mrs. Penley and persuaded — a dull, horrifying possibility occurred to her. She had n't thought of it when

she put the welcome things on. But no, Pippin could n't, she could n't have stolen the things! How could she?

Mrs. Clark was still speaking:

"Is n't it wonderful!" she looked at the girl's white face, "what you are doing? Oh, if I was young—!"

"Oh, it's not so wonderful, Mrs. Clark. Lots of girls do it." She moved restively. "I'm sorry to run away so soon but I'll simply have to—" She spoke truly. A few more minutes would have meant her betrayal. "I am so glad to have seen you."

"Come on up to our rooms," urged Elvira.

"I wish I could, but I can't, thank you, dear," Leonora rose steadily. "I must get along now. When you come back I will, if I may."

She forced an engaging smile. Elvira hugged her and hanging upon her arm, with Mrs. Clark following, they moved through the room.

"Now, say," Elvira gushed when they were without, "we've a car hired all the time and it can take you home and get back before we need it, can't it, Mother!"

"Well, it must take Leonora home, Elvira!" assented Mrs. Clark cordially.

From one to the other Leonora went to be clasped and embraced and finally the car drew up and she was stowed into it.



"Take care of your pretty self," were Mrs. Clark's last words.

"Thank God," Leonora murmured, as the car moved away.

She sat dully wondering about such things as whether Sid Long would buy that house Charlie had written her about. Sid Long was to be Elvira's career! Charlie Browne might marry, too. He could n't go through life moping over a certain girl named Mollie. She began to cry, words came from her lips whisperingly:

"Charlie Browne, I *wish* you would come and get me. I want you!"

She must go back to Pippin. She could hardly bear to face it. Pippin who stole! Hard accusing words rose righteously to Leonora's lips. She was again her victim—contaminated by going out in stolen clothing. But suddenly she asked herself, was she better or even as good as this unfortunate child? She realized with pain that her own plight had instigated the theft—if theft it was. Eagerness to appear well to these home people had let her dress herself up regardlessly—only she had n't thought of it at the time. Tears coursed down her cheeks. She had known her weakness yet stayed with Pippin. But had not the girl needed her? Was this the reward for standing by her?

"Oh, Charlie Browne!" she sobbed, as though he could help. She saw clearly that her angry re-

proof was the last thing to be visited on poor Pippin! She understood too clearly that Pippin's recovery of her clothes was intentionally a reward.

The car turned into Jubilee Court and moved through the narrow passage slowly. It stopped. She did not get out at once, she felt dull and queer. Then the voice of Pippin and her firm, guiding little hand roused Leonora.

She felt herself led as upon the first time she came to Jubilee Court, up the stairs and into the little room. She suffered the removal of her clothes.

"That's over awright, and in tip-top style too," she heard from Pippin.

For a moment it was gratifying that Pippin should see she had friends, little Pippin who had stolen the clothes for her to go pleasuring in.

Suddenly Leonora wheeled and faced her. Pippin stood still, her black eyes met Leonora's in tragic expectancy. They looked at each other. Pippin backed to the chest of drawers, propping herself against it.

"I went to Bloomsbury Square and your box was in the entry-way, off the kitchen. I got the maid to go upstairs to ask Mrs. Penley could I see 'er an' then I went in an' found the box and 'aving your keys along, I opened it and got the things."

"You took the keys," accused Leonora sharply.

Pippin cowered. "You did n't dream 'ow I'd got 'em when you dossed up," she threw out.

Was she taunting her, wondered Leonora, ashamed.

"You know I did not! I did n't stop to think — I've trusted you, you see! And you *know* I would never have allowed your doing such a thing!"

"Oh, yes," but Pippin was bitter, "I know that. I wanted you to 'ave the things, no matter 'ow — even if I went to quod. *That's* 'ow I felt, when I did it. I wanted to do su'think for you — but you can't understand. It's 'ere. I wanted you to 'ave the things no matter 'ow; then, just now — but after I'd done it, I saw I did n't want you to 'ave them that bad, or that way, because you would n't want to and so I see I was off the track and still a wrong 'un —" she despaired.

Leonora looked up.

But a tortured light gleamed in Pippin's eyes. A light of self-inflicted punishment.

"That's not all I done. I tried for su'think else — a purse!"

Leonora started back.

Pippin opened her arms, her palms.

"I tried — and I could n't," simply. "D' yer believe me — oh," wildly, "*do* you, Miss?"

"Yes," Leonora said bravely. "I believe you."

She sank into a chair, trying to be calm.

"Oh, Pippin, I want to help you —"

"Then don't leave me yet. Believe me, Miss, and stay with me a bit longer, don't leave me —"

It was the postman knocking and persistently calling "Raymond!" that broke upon them.

"See what it is," Leonora bade her. Pippin moved to the door, drying her tears. Yes, the postman called her name and she slipped out. There was a postcard from Dandy. On one side a raised floral design of great beauty, on the other a message.

Lordship been fretty. Me on the jump, tied hand and foot. Got eye on tip-top thing for me Pippin.  
D.

Dandy was good! The message brightened the ending of a heavy day.

## CHAPTER XIV



HE hardy contour of her apple-cheek was softened to oval. The ruddy color had paled to the delicacy of rose pink. Her bodices had been altered for she liked them snug.

Nothing else occurred to mark the slow passing of time except the dwindling of the marmalade while the contents of the tea-canister seemed fairly to evaporate.

Ancient rolls were cheapest and steamed over the kettle, spread lightly with that delicacy known as dripping, by Pippin were esteemed most delectable. But Miss Lawrence ate them in their stale crispness, preferring marmalade to dripping. She left the housekeeping problem entirely to Pippin; who, striving to provide some delicacy at least once a day, did not know that receiving anything at all to eat was now a surprise to the young lady.

Past were the days of shrimps and watercress! And suet puddings, steamed in a pot that hung from a crane over the little grate fire, were no more. Miss Lawrence, it seemed, was off puddings any-

how, in spite of a vow she had once made that delighted Pippin.

"I shall never again feel properly nourished without suet puddings, my little friend — they are life giving!" were her words.

The last pudding she had managed seemed to Pippin very pasty from too much water and not enough flour and she had lacked heart to press Miss Lawrence to finish her portion.

So she could only keep a roll on the round, clean, little wooden bread-plate, and the marmalade which she never touched herself, handy for Miss Lawrence at any time, because of late she only nibbled, and nibbling should be done often, if one can be tempted to it.

Pippin for her part had a craving — it seemed to be for the soothing drop. In spite of everything! But she failed to consider her craving's source. This time not wholly wanton; it was aggravated by need of wholesome food. Strange to her, temptation had taken new form. Pippin's eyes raised ever and again to Their Majesties. In no extremity had *she* ever thought of them! And now this morning — well, how they stood out on the wall. Perhaps they had done that with her dad. She turned her back to the pictures and thought of Dandy. He was her hero.

Having a hero and a lovely lady who expects your splendid promises kept is a help — a big help. Yet

could either of them know what it was to want — spirits! That was it, they did n't know. She knew — and yes, her dad knew! And old Kitty! That kind knew. But she was not that kind. A sure alternative came to her mind. But ah — Miss Lawrence had said: "That is a coward's way!"

Suddenly a whistle — Dandy's, trilled summarily from the street. She looked out. He beckoned frantically. She understood — he had come about a situation. She seized her cap, but her eye caught Miss Lawrence's pink hat on the bed, too. Faded and partly discarded it was now, but it was better than the cap and, inspired to look her best because of Dandy's recommendation, she caught up the hat. It suggested the pink parasol in the corner.

She descended to the Court, obscured to the eyebrows, the pink hat flopping rakishly. But her face below was a happy, hopeful sight — the worry of temptation forgotten.

"'S'truth," Dandy greeted, "you do look nobby!"

"Lummy, old chap, I'm all of a-tremble between fear and 'ope! What is it?" she panted.

"Barmaid, dear, at The Rose and Crown!"

"Barmaid?" her lips framed the words but no sound came forth.

A chill crept along down her back. She leaned against the lamp-post, on the corner they had reached.

"Barmaid!" she finally got it out aloud. "You

don't *mean* it — oh, Dandy, anythink but that. I could n't, you know —”

“A barmaid's berth is awright, Victoria Alexandra,” he looked at her in surprise.

But he saw that her face was fearful.

“In the bar where the drink is —” she mumbled wildly, hardly realizing she had said it, until he started back, staring.

“*That's* what you're afraid of,” he accused; “the drink!”

She could not speak.

“You — you've been used to spirits!” He drew farther away, pulled his hat over his eyes and looked at her from under it.

“That's what your Doll person meant!” he fairly sneered.

He looked round as though expecting to see Doll. His eyes came back to Pippin — his kind eyes, cold and shocked.

“What else?” he demanded. “Stealing?”

The girl stood as though rooted to the spot, the wide hat almost covering her face. Yet she peered out, fearfully, fascinated by Dandy's wrathful contempt.

“Stealing!” he said.

Suddenly he leaped toward her.

“What else?”

She started, faintly comprehending yet doubting his meaning.



"What else?" he thundered, arms rigid, fists doubled.

"Dandy, oh, Dandy!" She threw off the hat to see him, to lift up her pleading face. "Dandy, old chap — nothink else! Nothink *else* — I swears it!"

He grasped her folded hands, bent and peered long into her eyes. Then he threw her back. His head dropped forward, hands went to his pockets.

"Dandy," she begged. "Give us a chanct — one chanct. I'll go and *be* barmaid, I'll show you I'm str'ight! I am str'ight, s'elp me! I'm str'ight as you —"

"You'll go there and try?" he looked up.

She caught up the hat.

"Come, make 'aste!"

He looked round.

"If I could get me 'ands on that person —"

"Yes," Pippin sobbed, "she learned me, but it was n't all Doll! It was Dad, it was —"

"Your dad?"

"'E was always out o' work!"

Dandy's face worked convulsively.

"You believe me, Dandy?" she whispered, thinking back, of his fearful question. "You don't believe —"

She failed to see the pitying tenderness of his face, or to comprehend that speech would not come for his suffering.

She held out her hands, pleadingly.

"Dandy," she wailed, "oh, Dandy, me 'ero —"

He swung round, opened his arms and caught her to him.

"Come," he said in a moment, "to The Rose and Crown!"

They started, clinging closely together. She talked; from the beginning, she told him everything. It was awful to hurt him so. And he was so kind and so wild, looking out all the time for somebody upon whom to revenge her. Then she told him, almost laughing, that to *show 'em* was the way. To go str'ight was showing 'em! And to be barmaid, be actually engaged where spirits flowed free as the Thames — and not to even taste —! He caught her hands: "Can you do it, dear?" Could she! And that was not all she would be doing. Her reform was to be complete! When they reached the place he paused to instruct her: "I'll stop outside not to rattle you like, see?" he said. "The old barkeep's waiting. I've told 'im you're inexperienced but sharp and learns quick. Tell 'im practice makes perfect and in a little time you can mix anythink 'e can!"

He saw her enter the barroom, then lighting his pipe, took up a feverish pacing before the place. At last he knew. And ah, *how* she needed him.

She made her retreat from The Rose and Crown backward, the parasol shoved out as a kind of feeler.

"You've got it, old gal?" He caught her hand and beamed upon her hat.

"I starts to-night. I'm not afraid —" she whispered, "I starts to-night at seven."

She stood, leaning against him, and gazed over the entrance of The Rose and Crown. Adjoining it was The Royal Theater of Varieties, and while in the barroom she had seen swinging doors leading to the foyer of the Variety Emporium; a matter of great convenience to the patrons of each establishment!

"Come," he said, "we'll go along an' drop in for ices some plice in the Circus, what? Look out for the parasol then, parasols *can* do a bit o' damage!" He pressed her arm fondly, with the warning.

"These togs belongs to me young lady," she explained. Then suddenly, "What I'd give to see 'er and — an earl —"

"I'm happy to tell you 'is lordship has had a bit o' luck; a windfall!" broke in Dandy. "'E sold what 'e called a rotten sketch. It 'ad been a whole melodramer, but 'e carved it down for a man not wishing so much of a pl'y an' sold it to 'im, see?"

Pippin nodded, the pink brim flopped.

"It *was* a windfall! It brought us in quite a bit," continued Dandy, "and if it should ever make a hit, 'is lordship is to 'ave some more money,

though 'e says a hit is the last thing it 'll make! 'E does laugh about it, now and then — but 'e's deep in on a new 'un. A rum thing 'e says, if it works out. He talks very little. Oh, 'e's in very deep indeed on the new pl'y an' it's very seldom I leaves 'im!"

They moved along slowly. Suddenly Pippin's glance was attracted by the posters arrayed near the entrance to the Royal Theater of Varieties.

"Look!" she cried, drawing him nearer, "only look, old chap. 'Ere is a grand pl'y coming to The Royal."

They drew up and looked closely, eagerly at the picture-poster. It depicted a gentleman in the act of counting the enormous gems of a necklace and, from a window behind, a masked burglar had entered and crept upon him. But even as the villain advanced on his victim, a slender, fair-haired form, in trailing white negligée came gliding behind, pointing a revolver at the robber's head.

"Go it!" Pippin shrieked, clinging to Dandy. "Pluck 'im, Miss! Pluck 'im in the crumplet!"

Dandy shook her.

"Only a pl'y, old gal; keep calm!"

"It's coming to The Royal," she shrilled. "There y' are, only read it. '*Coming! Coming! This great one-act play. "Miss Nestor's Necklace."* Coming!'"

But Dandy drew her away, because his lordship would be waiting and there was just time to stop for ices.

They reached a crossing, leading out of Piccadilly Circus and here were halted before a parade of "The Great Army of Unemployed," as the marchers' banner enlightened.

"Bally bounders," growled Dandy. "A pack of bally bounders!"

Pippin started, her arm which he affectionately grasped stiffened, and peering down under the hat Dandy saw how startled she looked.

He stared round, suspecting Doll's presence but no sign of her!

"What is it, tell us now! Are you 'ungry? You are!"

He was terrified.

"G'on!" she said with attempted raillery. "No, I'm not 'ungry!"

She peered after the line of unemployed and looked again at the little bright-eyed man, carrying the banner. Their eyes had met, he had briefly faltered but there was no welcoming recognition in his daughter's face.

"Come along o' Dandy," her lover said, drawing her with him. "You're that soft 'earted you fancy *they're* suffering."

He nodded after the band of British working-men.

"Some of 'em perhaps would turn an honest penny," he added a little less harshly, "but most of 'em, my dear, *are* bally bounders. The thought o' work gives 'em the sick."

She did not answer and a little farther along Dandy ushered her into a tea-shop where he gave an order for sandwiches, boiled eggs, tea and seed-cake, to be followed by ices, an order generous enough to astound any young lady. Pippin fell to with relish. The disappearance of sandwiches was rapid and Dandy gave up counting both from wonder and realizing the bad form of keeping tab on your guest's appetite. And how they made up with the strong hot tea for what she *had* wanted! They had come to the ices when Dandy, surprised by a look from under the pink hat, reached out for her hand so clumsily that her spoon went rattling to the floor, but with a solemn handshake he said: "You're my gal. I'm your old man, dear — see what I mean!"

"You fair are a 'erol!" she murmured, half sobbingly, astonished at the reality of such things. "And I'm not afraid — of nothing!"

As Pippin returned to Jubilee Court she was struck suddenly anew with the first force of its peaceful beauty. For days her senses had been dull to the clean little windows, the fragrant, flowering window-boxes. To-day she saw it all with old appreciation, even discovering the vines to have crept

farther up the house in which she dwelt and that soon one little fork would reach her window.

"The pretty thing 'as been climbin' all the time," she smiled, "an' I not seein' it! I don't fancy Miss 'as seen it neither!"

She bounded up the steps but entered her room softly. Of late she had been more gentle in manner, bearing a tenderly reverent attitude toward Miss Lawrence whom she sometimes found sitting near the window, her body very still as though she had left it there and gone in mind, perhaps, back over the sea to her own country.

She was there when Pippin came in.

"It's come, Miss, the good luck!" said Pippin softly.

Miss Lawrence looked up; she stared and at last smiled.

"I've got work, Miss. I'm took on as barmaid, at The Rose and Crown! 'Alf a sovereign a week is the wages an' me teas found, I bein' on duty from three in the afternoon to eleven-thirty at night!" She raised her hand to straighten her cap and felt the hat.

"I am just awfully glad, Pippin," Miss Lawrence said, "and I see you found something to dress up a little in."

"It was so important, Miss, an' I felt quite certain of me luck if I 'ad it on — you're *not* vexed, I 'ope!"

"I am only thinking," said Leonora, "how really becoming pink is to you. I wear the hat with the large roses on the side rather than in the back, but anyhow you've got the position and if you think the hat helped —"

Pippin flew to the glass.

"I ain't exactly suited to it," she admitted, removing it carefully.

"Then," Miss Lawrence said decidedly, "it must be made to suit you."

She took the hat and bent up a side of the brim.

"Bring me some thread and a needle," she said.

Now the only thing marring great happiness for Pippin was knowledge of the letter she had posted the night before and which must be then on its way across the sea to the town of Goshen, Indiana.



## CHAPTER XV



**M**R. DICKY ROGERS, acting manager of The Royal Theater of Varieties, found The Rose and Crown most convenient to his frequent needs. The Rose and Crown no doubt looked upon Mr. Rogers as a profitable patron. In his ultimate capacity of patron and friend, he spoke approvingly of the new barmaid to the managing bartender, who, no longer a young man, desired a spry assistant.

Mr. Dicky was the first to be served by her. He took his drink with her eager eyes glowing through his glass. Mr. Rogers was accustomed to having his approval sought but he was in an amiable mood, perhaps, that night for he praised the little barmaid heartily.

"Don't tell me you're a novice," he grinned at her and winked at the landlord. He smacked his lips comically over the B. & S.

It made Pippin laugh. She thought Mr. Rogers most awfully jolly and nice. It seemed a gentlemanly thing to put himself out so for the encouragement of a poor girl. Mr. Rogers soon found

out, too, that the little barmaid was interested in what went on in The Royal.

"I loves a good pl'y," she told him one night. "There's a young man of my acquaintance which goes to all the first nights, nearly. 'E's ever so good a judge — 'is master's a pl'ymaker, writes 'em, y' know!"

"Indeed!" Mr. Dicky said.

"Yes, sir," nodded Pippin, "and we're both very much interested in a pl'y we see billed outside 'ere — 'Miss Nestor's Necklace'!"

"Yes, that's coming — we're counting a lot on that," said Mr. Rogers hopefully. "I've got a new card begins to-night too," he added, this so every one could hear. "She's been a great favorite in the past — number nine she is on the program to-night! She's young and alluring as ever — perennial she is!"

"Singer, — comic, or what?" The barmaid displayed most intelligent interest.

Mr. Rogers told her all about Number Nine who was, he said, a chanson or singer — and did imitations. There were other drawing-cards too, he said, though some of them could only draw salaries!

Pippin laughed at this.

"I'm always on the lookout for unrecognized talent too —" Dicky said, including some other patrons who stood near, in this confidence. "Take the boy fiddler —"

Suddenly applause sounded within The Royal.

"There y' are —" Dicky consulted his watch, "yes, she's on!"

He emptied his glass at a gulp.

"She's on!" he cried and turned to numerous acquaintances at the bar. "Don't miss Number Nine, gentlemen. A new card. She takes the tip-top macaroon for humor and pathos. Come on!"

With a dive he was gone through the swinging doors. His friends soon followed, even to the landlord. His taste, in the variety line, was a little jaded. He was repeatedly urged by the friendly Mr. Dicky to cater to it, standing-room gratis, within the swinging doors. Presently the bar was deserted. Pippin waited a second, slipped out, danced across the floor and inserted her head with some risk between the doors. In this way she managed a view of the stage, at the same time a substantial portion of her did duty by the barroom. It was not long before she withdrew her head.

"I call Number Nine an old stiff," she sniffed disgustedly.

She did a few steps herself, a light waltz over the barroom floor took her back behind the bar. She was thinking of Miss Lawrence who wanted an engagement so badly. She began polishing the beer-pulls energetically, keeping at them until the doors opened and some men straggled back. Mr. Rogers came breathlessly, as though he instead of

Number Nine had done the turn. He bent to congratulatory slaps on the back.

"She's still pretty, if she is a back number!"

"Why, I remember her — in her prime, way back — oh, before she married —"

Mr. Rogers interrupted the last speaker's reminiscence by calling for drinks all round.

"I s'y, Dick — how's the Earl of Clavering? He ought to be pleased at what you've unearthed — her name'll draw —"

Pippin stared over the bar.

*The Earl of Clavering?* Did they mean an earl — a real earl was about? Had they meant a real earl when speaking as she had frequently heard them of *Clavering*? Was this Clavering, with a fad for the play and also for making money, who was behind Dicky Rogers and The Royal, was he the *Earl* of Clavering? Perhaps, by some miracle —

Through the doors came another, a stranger to Pippin. He wore a monocle, a blond lock curled low on his white forehead. He came slowly toward the bar, twirling his waxed blond mustachios thoughtfully. There were two stones of magnificent brilliance, though they might have been even larger, adorning his shirt-bosom. His gentlemanly fingers scintillated from more than one gem.

Somebody murmured:

"The Earl!"

"Ah," Dicky Rogers swung round.

"I say," his lordship drawled, "she was not so bad."

"Lord Clavering is pleased with Number Nine," grinned Dicky.

"She'll do better," Lord Clavering said hopefully. "Retirement is bad for an artist — and she was nervous; she'll look up! Drinks for everybody!" His lordship's eye fell on Pippin, whom he had plainly fascinated. "Oh, ho," he said, "now, at last we've a reason for calling this bally hole The Rose and Crown!"

A laugh went round.

"G' on," said Pippin, afterward sadly recalling the familiarity, "but I s'y, I likes bein' a rose — next best to wearing a crown."

A louder laugh came from everybody, the loudest was the Earl's guffaw. He threw down the money for the drinks and when she made change he held up a jeweled hand, rejecting it. One shilling and twopence went into Pippin's pocket, "honest," her heart thumped happily, "an' it'll go to soothe old Sally."

It was a lordly tip.

But it was the Earl himself, who inspired her interest. She watched as he took Mr. Rogers aside and they leaned together over the bar, speaking in low tones. Joyous, she felt she had her earl, now for his knowing Miss Lawrence. He stood at the end near the beer-pulls. Pippin went there to draw

a mug of it. His lordship was speaking decidedly. It was not of Number Nine, the "chanson or singer," but of the little play—"Miss Nestor's Necklace."

"It's a good little play, 'Miss Nestor' is — and I know it! There's money in it. The money's got to be got out! Do you fancy I'm going to lose what I've planked down? You can't, Mr. Rogers!"

"But, your lordship," Mr. Rogers began anxiously, "nobody short of a real American could get that accent and all quite so pat as you seem to want it, sir!"

Pippin rushed to her customer with the beer and came back busying herself over the beer-pulls, already polished highly. The Earl still talked emphatically.

"Maybe she is a good actress, Dick, but she's a cockney and it's out when she speaks; maybe she is doing her best — I don't say she's not — but I do say, if that's her best I'm glad to know it now. Miss Nestor is an American girl! A slight accent adds to the color, the realness of the thing. I want it — not overdone of course, but I want it!"

Pippin hung over the bar.

"I say, sir," pleaded Dicky Rogers, "the thing's billed to-night week. You would n't oust this girl at the eleventh hour and no certainty of a better one, would you, sir —?"

"I will have a better one!" the Earl of Clavering answered and pounded the bar with his fist.

His rings gleamed.

"I will, damme, I will! I've put — how much, over a hundred and fifty pounds in this thing — it's got to have a fair chance after that. It's got *no* chance without the right leading woman, an actress that portrays the character. It wants one with ginger — she'll make the play — an' she's got to be found."

"She is found!"

The low eager cry of Pippin startled the gentleman.

"Ho," she went on, in a voice vibrating with emotion, "I've got one at 'ome, sir. Miss Leonora Lawrence, a reely American, an' can't 'elp it though she *do* try. Oh, sir, if it's American talk you want — oh, your lordship, sir — *dear*, give 'er the chanct!"

"Gal!" growled Mr. Rogers.

"Do you mean *you* know of an American actress?" inquired the Earl with interest.

"Do I — I'm maid to one, a beautiful one, your lordship!" breathed Pippin. "Yes, yes, indeed, sir, and she wants an engagement, sir —"

"Fetch me a stout!" yelled Dicky Rogers.

The Earl shrugged his shoulders in impatience. Pippin did not hurry to serve Mr. Rogers.

"Now, sir," he murmured coaxingly to his lord-

ship, "this young lady is n't seen to advantage at rehearsals just yet; wait till you see her *play* the part, wait, sir! I *know* her. You do not, sir,—if I may say so!"

The Earl turned thoughtfully and sauntered off into the theater.

"You've got to keep your place," Mr. Rogers said, observing Pippin's glance follow his lordship, "else you 'll lose it."

"Thank y', sir," she replied absently with eyes narrowed, and a reckless unsteadiness of hand that slopped Mr. Rogers' stout wastefully about.

She was disappointed in Mr. Rogers. Certainly he was not a true friend to the Earl of Clavering, wanting a jolly rotter, as the Earl had called her, to play Miss Nestor.

Pippin dodged back and forth behind the bar, giving the greatest satisfaction to everybody and saving the bartender many steps. She was not slow at repartee and her answers to frequent sallies provided amusement, too, with the refreshments the gentlemen required.

She was wearing black, the custom for barmaids. The bodice fitted snugly. It fastened like her frocks in private life, by a row of buttons straight down the front. A very liberal amount of material in the skirt lay in folds round her hips. Cuffs and collar of white gave a neat finish to the costume. A lace-edged white muslin bow was her headdress.



The dainty hands of Miss Lawrence had fashioned it.

The lace-edged bow quivered, the buttons moved up and down as she darted dutifully to and fro behind the bar. Her eyes were upon the swinging doors. She craved another word with the Earl of Clavering. He was not only an earl but the producer of "Miss Nestor's Necklace"! It was a play with an American lady in it. Miracles!

But his lordship did not come back again and neither did Mr. Rogers. The barmaid winked and whispered to herself that she was "on." Dicky Rogers was detaining the earl.

When at last the bar closed, Pippin set out homeward very hopefully. The Earl was one to have what he wanted in spite of Dicky Rogers. She swung along Southampton Row, into Leicester Square, hurried to Piccadilly Circus and ran for a starting motor-bus. She rode, looking down upon the city; she loved it lamplit, men and women in gala dress. She drew a long breath from the sweet dewy freshness as they skimmed along Piccadilly, past St. James' Park. She heard the bleat of a lamb; here and there was a human form, stretched at full length. She knew what the dark objects were—sometimes they lay there by day—and wondered about these unfortunate ones. Some of them had no doubt been to jail. She had never really felt in fear of prison, but now thought of it

sent a little shiver down her back. She looked ahead, down the lighted road. There were bumps and stops in it just as in life, but one *could* keep on straight, with one's mind made up. And not since she became barmaid had she *wanted* to take a drop. Sometimes she held the stuff tantalizingly under her nose — and thought of Dandy! First his contempt, then his pity, tenderness, forgiveness! It was enough.

She left the omnibus, hurried along the little court. Outside the door of her room, Pippin stopped sharply. Though it was late at night, voices sounded within. One voice above the others caught her ear, turning her cold.

It was the voice of Doll.

"She's never told you of knowing me then, Miss! 'Er old friend Doll — an' the w'y I've 'elped 'er out with that good-for-nothink old dad, she's got —"

The voice of Kitty chimed in weakly, unintelligibly.

"Doll, Doll!" thumped in Pippin's brain and pounded out her heart-beats. "*Doll* in there *squealin'* to *Miss!*"

It was the realization of a long-haunting fear. Flight was her first impulse, then quick fury gripped her. She threw herself upon the door and into the room. Trembling, she faced them. To her blurred vision the lovely one she adored stood fearfully

back in the shadow, already pale from contamination. The purple, bedecked Doll shadowed by Kitty moved forward, staring.

"Cat! Yer narsty cat!" It was a low growl from Pippin.

"Whatever 's up, Pippin?" Doll showed signs of fright.

Kitty behind her looked at the door. They were neither of them brave.

"I feared you'd do it!" Pippin jerked out the words. "Yes, I feared you'd come in 'ere an' squeal!"

"Why 'ow you go on, Pip, 'ark at 'er! What *does* she mean?" wondered Doll.

Kitty crawled a few steps nearer the door. Pippin saw how seedy she looked, then with a horrible pang of guilt recalled presenting to her the chate-laine that she carried.

"What do I mean?" Pippin cried and pointed to Miss Lawrence. "I mean, you bally bounder, you've come 'ere and squealed to 'er. *Squealed* and lost me me dear friend, the lady I loves." Her voice broke.

Over Doll's blue lips flitted a smile, so goading to Pippin that she lunged forward, saw Doll fall back, heard Kitty scream, and at the quick cry of her name from Miss Lawrence she halted, gripping her hands in restraint.

"I don't care for nothink now but scratchin' yer



**A scream and Pippin sprang**



to pieces," she gasped out. "I'd go to quod, die there an' glad to do it, *though I am turned honest and str'ight now* an' been living along of a lady. An' very well! What if I *was* a wrong 'un and picked pockets, what about your 'Arry and you — who, I asks, taught me the trick, *who?* Why don't you answer!"

Pippin tried to laugh suddenly; she turned to Miss Lawrence and pointed the visitors out to her.

"Now then *who* taught me to pick a pocket! Tell the lady that!" she urged.

"'Ow should I know about your evil w'ys; it's a surprise to me, Pippin." Doll's purple feather shook in virtuous indignation. She turned to the silent form in the shadow near the window.

"You see, Miss, she's squealed on 'erself. I'm innocent of such doings. I'm sure *I* never could show 'er 'ow to do su'think I know nothink about — *pick a pocket!* Kitty—" she turned to the frail clinging creature whose garments exhaled a confused fragrance. "Kit, this is no plice for us — and that pore young lady to take up with the like —"

A scream and Pippin sprang, Doll dodged and then with two hands quick, gentle and firm upon her shoulders, Pippin gasped, weakened and sank at Leonora's feet.

"You'd better go now," Leonora said quietly.

"Well, rather!" agreed Doll.

Kitty had reached the door. Leonora stood waiting.

"Pity," were Doll's last words, "but she sometimes takes spirits. Good-night, Miss!"

"Good-night, Miss, an' I'm sorry for *you*!" echoed Kitty.

"Good-night," returned Leonora bravely.

For a time there were only Pippin's sobs.

Out of it all, this loathsomeness and vice this little creature was struggling to rise. Looking back to the time of being her victim Leonora recalled it as the inevitable downward slip in the hard ascent the girl had courageously begun of her own volition. Leonora had never felt more pity and kindness toward her. Her own fear of these creatures was forgotten in resentment of their pursuit of Pippin. She raised her gently.

"Just when I'd got me 'ands on an earl and everything tiptop—" she wept. Suddenly she looked at Leonora. "Now, you'll leave me! Oh, very well. I quit! I quits trying. I'll turn a trick that'll get me took up. Then I'm safe enough —"

"Hush," cried Leonora; "as soon as possible you will leave here. They followed me from the corner," the recollection seemed a little terrifying. "I went out to post a letter. It was later than I thought, but I had taken time to decide about sending the letter and only got it off late. They did

not speak until they came up behind me here to the door."

Pippin's eyes were wide with horror.

"I never like you out late — alone either, Miss —"

"The letter I posted," Leonora went on, "was accepting a temporary engagement — position, perhaps I should say, and in a few days I shall go away to take it."

"You're never going off with another extravagance, to wear —"

"No," Miss Lawrence said. "Not that!"

Pippin waited but got no further explanation. And for the moment, forgetting her own trouble, she determined on a direct appeal to the Earl — to save his play!

To reassure Miss Lawrence and retract her own desperate threats she began about Dandy, telling a little of how he had proved a hero.

"With 'im and you, Miss," she wanted to know, "ave n't I everythink to thank Gawd for?"



## CHAPTER XVI



ANDY had hovered round the barroom the entire evening, watching the busy barmaid. She saw him, she raised her dark eyes to his with a frequent smile and a little toss of her head, but this did not satisfy Dandy. Yet he told himself he *was* a sensible chap. The girl had to mind her duties.

Hands in his pockets, he paced the barroom to the annoyance of more than one patron. Bustling in for hurried refreshment, gentlemen found the slender form an obstacle to progress. And Dandy eyed them as they approached the bar with their familiar greetings to Pippin. How tactful she was too; friendly, yet nothing about her was more winning than her reserve.

Dandy stepped up to the bar and catching her eye again, ordered a lemon-squash, but the landlord officiously served him. Dandy sighed and stood by while Pippin served a loud Yorkshireman and answered brightly to his sallies. Just then two men stopped near, talking in low tones, and what they said suddenly seemed to interest Pippin beyond the point of restraint. She watched them, bending her



The Photograph

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ear to catch their words. In one Dandy recognized the Earl of Clavering, in the other his manager, Dick Rogers. They were talking of a play, it seemed. The Earl was very earnest. Dandy wondered at Pippin's staring so. But she stopped even nearer them, slyly deserting the Yorkshireman. This brought her closer to Dandy who tried to give her a reproving look. Suddenly she leaned forward.

"I've su'think most partic'lar to show your lordship — if you please!"

Mr. Rogers looked up angrily, the Earl half amused.

"Yes?" smiled he.

Then as Mr. Dicky turned and walked away, something flashed from her pocket. The Earl of Clavering fixed his monocle and Pippin eagerly, earnestly whispering to him, he gazed at what she held. Dandy slipped a little closer. His firm chin almost brushing the Earl's shoulder, he peered over it and saw that his lordship regarded a photograph, of whom, Dandy did not know; a lady, it seemed, and the Earl liked it too!

A smile of surprise, of satisfaction was on his face.

Pippin was talking hurriedly, it might have been a plea for some one's life. His lordship listened, nodding over the photograph.

Dandy began pacing the floor again, exasperated, distressed; wild notions beset him. The Earl gave

back the photograph and turning away thoughtfully went back into the theater; the barroom was quiet now and Dandy stepped up to the bar.

"Victoria Alexandra," his voice was hoarse as he leaned toward her.

"What 'll you 'ave?" Pippin asked absently.

"What 'll I 'ave?" His slim legs doubled like lemonade straws, he leaned heavily on the bar. "I 'll 'ave a word with you!" he said.

She stood before him but her mind, her soul, it seemed, was within the swinging doors of The Royal with Lord Percy, Earl of Clavering. She mopped the bar vigorously.

"Victoria Alexandra," Dandy said again, "remember you 're only a pore gal in real life—"

"You 've got your cuff in the damp," she pushed him aside.

"I s'y, dear," he went on now patiently, "you would n't want to be tossed aside like a toy. Listen to old Dandy as loves you!"

"A toy," she said, "who's a toy! Don't be unreasonable, old chap. I'm thinkin' of you every minute, you an' Miss. Can't you see what I'm doing—trying to get my Miss Lawrence the engagement of leading lady in this pl'y, 'Miss Nestor's Necklace'?"

"No," cried Dandy with relief. "Is that it—truth now?"

"Where's your eyes then?" Pippin demanded.

"Did n't you see the photo 'is lordship was looking at? 'E says there's money in the pl'y with the right leading lady. Lor' love a duck, but it'd be easy sailing for Miss, if old Mr. Dicky 'ad n't so much to s'y. I fair 'ates *him!*"

"Interferin' is he?" asked Dandy. "'E's not got the say, though."

Before she could answer, the Earl of Clavering came quickly back into the barroom. Dandy gladly slipped a few steps away.

"I must say," exclaimed his lordship, "I'm awfully sorry not to have known of Miss Lawrence before!"

"But it's not too late yet, your lordship," cried Pippin. "I mean it's not too late, now, but it will be, sir —"

"Look here, where could I get her — say, at a moment's notice?"

Pippin turned her back, struggled briefly at the row of buttons on her bodice and quickly a slip of paper was thrust into his lordship's hand.

"It's put down there!" she said. "Send to me at a moment's notice, I'm 'er maid. I does for 'er at odd moments! Oh, sir, do try to manage it — I've such a feeling," the feeling nearly overcame her, "if you was to 'ave Miss you'd never regret it, sir! And if you lose time like, you'll lose 'er, for she's half made up 'er mind now to take su'think she's been offered!"

The Earl regarded her for a moment solemnly.

"You're a good little sort!" he said. "I'm sorry I can't promise. The time is so jolly short now." His lordship was harassed.

Pippin thrust her little face close. "Dare I to build up 'er hopes? Yes, I've 'alf a mind *to tell* 'er, sir?"

"Tell her," said the Earl. "I advise it! Just state how the matter stands and nothing more. That would prepare Miss Lawrence for the unexpected, we might say."

"You means the expected, don't you, sir?"

His lordship shook his head a little regretfully.

"I don't want to fly in the face of fate. If Miss Lawrence would n't do, either —"

"I tells Miss Lawrence to-night," cried the little barmaid, hushing the Earl's doubtful mutterings.

"Ah then, here's your lordship!"

It was Dicky Rodgers back again. Dandy came up quickly.

"You've got 'im! I'll wager a quid it's as good as done and your young lady gets the chance!"

"Oh, Dandy, do you think so?" she whispered back. "'E is a fretty earl an' I thought 'im so determined too. What's he 'olding back for?"

Dandy nodded firmly.

"'E's afraid to take the leap, but 'e will — you'll see. You keep at 'im! And now s'long, dear. I've 'ad no luck to-night — 'ardly a word

with you, but I must be off. See you to-morrow night, I 'ope!"

"Right-O!" sang out Pippin.

She saw the Earl led away by Mr. Rogers, talking, gesticulating.

"I trusts you!" whispered Dandy.

He went out and walked slowly along the street. He was reluctant to leave her to-night, even at the strong call of duty. He had not gone far when he decided that after all he would stroll back leisurely just to see if the Earl had not been already persuaded by the irresistible little barmaid.

Pippin, finding herself alone, thought of Dandy. She was sorry he had gone now, there was a chance for them to talk. Then the street door began to open slowly by an unseen hand.

"I knows yer, old chap!" she sang out. "I was 'oping—"

She stopped as an insignificant little man popped his head in, with a sly look round. A smile spread over his crafty countenance as he saw the girl alone. She stared at him hard, unsmiling. He slid along close to the bar and drew up before her.

"Dad!" she gasped.

"Yes, Pippin, your pore old dad! I've had a long walk. Quick, give us a drop o' su'think!"

"Dad," Pippin said, "where's Flossie?"

"Can't you give us a drink, eh?" he cried. "You can't? An' why not give us a drink?"



She looked at the swinging doors apprehensively as Dad Raymond became insistent.

"They's nobody about," he said. "What's your fright over? Ain't I your dad?"

He slapped the counter with his palm.

"'Ow did you find me? You've broke your promise!" she reminded angrily.

"Never you mind about that," he said. "And I found you simple enough! There is those that *tells* parents where their daughter is. You knows your old friend Doll!"

"Doll!" Pippin said. "Now look 'ere, Dad; where's your wife, where's Flossie?"

"You let me in for 'er, Pippin." Dad Raymond clinched his fists. "I don't s'y yer did it malicious but it was your doin'. Now I wants yer to tike me back—or more like, I'll tike *you* back. We'll go aw'y from Flossie. Ah, my dear, Flossie's not what your mar was. What'd your mar s'y, Pippin, at the w'y I'm treated?"

Seeing the look that for an instant softened her face, he pressed forward.

"Think o' your mar, child, and what'd she s'y at me 'aving to work so, for another woman!"

"She's your wife, now, Dad, Flossie is!" Pippin drew away from him. "An' where's your false tooth?" she asked sharply. "There's a narsty gap without it. Has Flossie seen you so?"

He dropped a few emphatic oaths. "Where's



"Dandy!" . . . "It's me dad!"

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me tooth?" he mocked. "Well, Solomon's got it. There!"

She leaned over the bar suddenly.

"You must get out of 'ere, but first listen! You s'y I did right by you after pore mar died, but, Dad, what I was doing for you was wrong. *You* know it — none better. It will never be that way again!"

His head sank between his shoulders, his eyes snapping turtle-like and angry.

"The King of England on 'is throne could n't a mide me believe me own daughter —"

He dived, caught her wrists and pinning them down upon the bar raised his voice.

"You 've turned against me an' I 'll not stand for it. I 've been told not to stand for it. I 'm not the only one you 've turned against!"

She struggled.

"Call for 'elp," he taunted. "Call out, then, we shan't be long. Ain't I your dad?"

She saw the street door open, welcomed the quick light rush of steps unheeded by Dad Raymond. Long, strong fingers closed upon his throat, bent him backward, down, down to a sickening heap upon the floor.

"Dandy!" Pippin breathed. "It's me dad!"

"Ah!" Dandy growled with satisfaction. His foot turned the groveling form over, he gazed upon the face of Dad Raymond earnestly, then seized him by the collar and another quick application of

boot-toe at once strengthened Dad Raymond's legs and restored his vision. Gripping his neck, Dandy dragged him to the street. Quickly a woman, a neat, full-figured, pleasant-faced person stepped up and placed her hand possessively upon the struggling Mr. Raymond's shoulder. He gave a sharp, fearful look at her and wriggled.

"It's you, me dear!"

"In there creatin' a disturbance I see." The lady addressed Dandy.

"In there attemptin' to intimidate 'is daughter, barmaid o' The Rose and Crown and engaged to me!" replied Dandy.

He raised his hat gallantly, at the same time keeping his hold of Mr. Raymond.

"Well, I'm 'is Missus," the woman said.

Emphasizing her right, Mrs. Raymond tugged at Raymond's arm. Then she whisked off his cap and ordered him to pick it up and replace it properly. His daughter just then peeked from the door of The Rose and Crown.

"Ah," smiled Flossie, "you pore gal, you. I've misjudged *you* cruel! I've wanted to tell you so, too. I know your father better now. I've traced him in a very roundabout w'y to-night! I told 'im he'd drive you to desperation." She spoke rapidly. "I've done *my* best for 'im! All I asks is that he work a part of the d'y. I can't keep 'im entire, nor

I should n't if I could, for I've too much self-respect."

Dragging Dad Raymond, and thus Dandy who still clutched him, she stepped nearer the doorway, speaking confidentially.

"I've got 'im job after job an' he throws 'em up, one after the other." She paused looking from the girl to Dandy. "Go back to your work, gal! Odd," she mused, "'ow a few sweet words, smiles an' a fancy wais'coat can fool a silly woman." She studied the object of her past infatuation.

"'Ave n't you got any shame?" she inquired. She seemed hoping for a glimmer of self-respect to appear. "I'd be pleased you should come to tea and fetch the young man," she told Pippin and smiled with her noted charm at Dandy. "I mike Sund'y me day at home. I don't allow 'im to down me respectable 'abits!"

Dandy released Mr. Raymond and bowed.

"Thank you!" Pippin returned. "We will come!"

She looked with true sympathy at the late widow, Flossie Fullerton, now Mrs. Ronald Raymond.

"Go back to your work, child!" Flossie said kindly. Then she turned Dad Raymond about and released him.

Facing Dandy he bowed, shyly.

"Pleased to meet yer," he said.

"'Ope to see you ag'in, Mr. R.," Dandy returned, with meaning.

"Thank y', sir," Mr. Raymond replied.

He straightened to a more dignified manner, and turned to Mrs. Raymond, smiling indulgently; then he nodded to his daughter and moved on. A little further along he had assumed an attitude of gallantry. It gave a glimpse of what had won his bride. He was guiding her rather than being forced homeward by her.

"'E's in good 'ands!" Pippin sighed.

"'E's in the best of 'ands," agreed Dandy, "an' he's off yours, dear — s'long again!" Dandy hurried away and Pippin went quickly back to her work.

Dandy reached home with his mind made up to speak to his master of Pippin. The time was not now so far off he hoped, when she would become Mrs. Daniel Thoms — his little missus. He felt she needed him.

## CHAPTER XVII



YOU know, Miss, the good luck might come to-d'y — this very mornin', even," Pippin said as she broke a soft-boiled egg into a glass, the way she had found Americans like their eggs.

"You remember I told you 'is lordship said, you was to be prepared for the expected like! You'll not stop out too long just in case it should come — it would be so unexpected to-d'y — so unexpected I most fancy perhaps it will come."

As she poured the tea and placed a chair for Miss Lawrence, she snatched a look at her pale face. Miss Lawrence was pinning on her hat.

"It would never do to stay in, hoping for what you don't expect, Pippin," she said, laughing, but a little anxiously. "And you see this other thing that I told you about — well, I'm not terribly pleased with it. Really I'm not suited to such a position, so in the next two days, before I am to go away and begin it, I must look harder than ever for something — in my own profession."

Leonora sat down to breakfast, Pippin waiting on her solicitously.



"Whatever is it, Miss 'as got 'erself engaged to?" she pondered.

But she did not ask.

There came a diffident knock.

"It's me — Sally Taylor!"

Pippin patiently admitted the caller.

"How are you, Sally?" she greeted; "this is a surprise!" Quickly she drew some silver from her pocket, but Sally did not seem to notice.

"Mother," she said, "'as made off. She's run away!"

Miss Lawrence rose from her chair; she and Pippin exchanging glances of astonishment.

"You're surprised!" Sally said. "Well, who wouldn't be! This is what she's done — she wrote me a nasty meaning letter. Still I determined not to get annoyed, Mother's 'ad her little lot o' trouble one way and another, and so I comes up to town at some expense this morning to find out just what ails her an' to 'elp her out. I come and find her gone. She's got her good clothes and left her old ones and gone! Gone with a man, I'm certain of it!"

"And what of that?" demanded Pippin. "Why should n't she go with a man?"

Sally Taylor's cheek flushed angrily.

"Indeed! Now look here. I come up to London in good faith to change places with Mother and give her a holiday in the country. I come to find

out what she's doing with her money and to give her some sensible advice." Sally paused. "I come too late!"

"Ho, s'y rather you've come just in the nick o' time," cried Pippin. "If you 'ad n't come, the plice as caretaker 'ere might a-been filled by another and so lorst to your family. This is a bit o' luck!"

She held out the money again.

"I'd intended sendin' it to you, Sally, just on account like. 'Ow's me little nipper?"

Sally's face softened.

"Much as ever I'd heart to leave him," she said. "He wanted to see you, but he's half-fare and besides he's lessons every day with me husband and the other fellows. He'll make a man, the little chap will!"

"Oh, Sally," Pippin cried. "You 'ave been good to take 'im to your 'eart so. I'll never forget you!"

"It's awright," smiled Sally.

"I've a berth now; barmaid, The Rose and Crown, and I'll soon begin to pay you regular!"

"I'm glad of that!" Sally admitted.

"Now then, you stop 'ere like a lamb and mind your mother's place since the boys are in good 'ands along of your Mr. Taylor," Pippin urged.

"They's nothing else for it," agreed Sally; "but where's she gone?"

"On a weddin' journey," replied Pippin. "I

can see 'er courage failed 'er about telling you and she's made off. It's a mistake, you see, Sally, keepin' your mother under so."

She took some more silver from her pocket and handed it to Sally.

"It's our week's rent," she said, glancing at Leonora. She had been wishing for a delicate way to make it known she had it. "We're not in advance," she explained, "but Miss Lawrence don't 'old with p'ying in advance! And it's well to be polite to the agent. You've a very severe manner, Sally."

Sally did not answer. She seemed very much downcast.

"Buck up," chirped Pippin; "after all, it is a weddin' and not a funeral. Love—" she mused sentimentally.

"Love!" jeered Sally Taylor, "at Mother's time of life!"

"Why not?" Pippin demanded. "I think it's sweet all along o' life an' I'm sure the cobbler 'as good qualities, too!"

"Cobbler?"

Pippin ignored this to hurry on.

"My dad went up to 'is ears in love of a widow. I did n't make a row. 'E married 'er too! 'E's in very good hands!"

The unusual sound of wheels clattering into the narrow little court startled them all.

Miss Lawrence and Pippin hurried to the window.

"Lor' lummy, it's a 'ansom-cab! A cab in the Court!"

"Might be it's Mother and the creature she's took up with!" Sally dashed into the hall and down the stairs to receive the couple warmly.

But after her tore Pippin. The single occupant of the hansom, a man, stepped to the pavement as she reached the street.

"I'm looking for a young person named Raymond." He paused to consult a card.

"Who wants me?" demanded Pippin with admirable calmness.

"The Earl of Clavering sends a message. Are you the gal?"

Without further ceremony, Pippin took the card from the man's hand and read aloud the message it bore.

Can you reach the young lady whom you spoke of and bring 'er to me at once?

"Wait!" With one word she was gone.

Leonora stood, expectant, in the center of the room when Pippin reached it.

"Miss, oh, Miss Lawrence, 's'truth, 'is lordship wants you! 'Eaven send us stren'th and look sharp, if you please." She thrust the written message before Leonora.

"Pippin . . . a real sure-enough call to arms!"

They looked at each other. Leonora rushed to the door and out.

"Blow-me-tight!" cried the practical Pippin, hurrying after; "you 've not had your egg, Miss!"

The waiting messenger touched his cap, and indicated the cab, as the eager lady rushed up to him. He assisted her to enter and permitted himself to be brushed aside that Pippin might do the same.

"To the Royal Theater of Varieties!" came her order in clarion tone and she added to the gaping Sally, "We can't keep the Earl of Clavering waiting, old gal!"

They drove out of the Court to the merriest notes the flutist had ever practised. A gay, glad trill followed them.

Only once during the ride did Pippin speak.

"'Ow long, Miss, do it take a letter to get to America; to Goshen where you come from?"

"About eight days," Leonora answered.

The cab drew up at the Royal Theater of Varieties and, closely following, drove the messenger they had left behind. He sprang to the pavement, entered the Royal and with marvelous promptness came out again, followed by the Earl of Clavering.

"*Im*," whispered Pippin, leaping from theansom and beckoning to his lordship. "'Ere she is, sir —'ere 's Miss Lawrence, your lordship."

The Earl smiled with evident satisfaction as his eager eyes lighted on Miss Lawrence. He mur-

mured her name and hurried to extend his own white hand, with, Pippin saw in dismay, not a jewel upon it this morning. He gravely assisted the young lady to alight.

"This is very fortunate," he told her, "most fortunate indeed!"

"Ain't it rum?" agreed Pippin in a polite aside.

"Very unprofessional thing occurred this morning," he hurried on, "—but maybe a good thing, too,—the lady rehearsing Miss Nestor, threw up the part!" He threw out his hands lightly. "You see she could *not* get the hang of the thing—no idea of the character, no go—nothing! No doubt I kept on at her to an harassing degree, but I'm backing the play, must have it right! Miss Nestor is the whole thing—are you a quick study, Miss Lawrence?"

He looked at her anxiously.

"Yes," Leonora answered reassuringly.

Her look, her voice and quiet manner inspired the anxious earl with confidence. His brow seemed to clear.

Miss Lawrence started toward the theater in a very business-like manner. His lordship hurried along beside her as they went in talking, at least his lordship talked. Miss Lawrence had the look of one quite determined to do or die. Pippin climbed into the hansom, sank back in the seat, sighing with the joy of greatest achievement. The persistent

appeal of the cabby peering through the top at last roused her.

"Where do you wish to go, I'm asking you, loidy? I've just 'ad orders to tike you back to Jubilee Court, if you s'y so!"

Pippin looked out and the man who had come for her nodded, from the pavement. He then had issued the orders to take her home.

"Very well!" she answered. "I'll simply 'ave to be back 'ere soon; but I'll go 'ome now — I likes a 'ansom!"

The cab started and she gave herself up to the pleasure of the drive. She thought of Dandy and of little Hal and wished they were with her. It was a very warm morning. She folded her arms upon her breast and looked out lazily.

For a long time she thought of Miss Lawrence and the play. What a wonderful thing she had actually done for her young lady. She had never felt so happy over anything in her life. Presently she began fancying herself a lady and the cab a private brougham. She thought of what she would buy if she had as much money as ladies sometimes have. A spotted veil, she decided on at once; some long, brilliant studded hat-pins and a rustling, pink silk petticoat, long black glacé kid gloves. But her mind went back to Miss Lawrence and the Earl. It lingered upon them. Finally a romantic vision of the handsome couple came to her. Lilies of the

valley, white satin and lace made the background, a slender circlet of diamonds rested upon the fair coils of Miss Lawrence's hair.

*Why* had she written that letter to Goshen, Indiana? She had acted hastily there. Still Goshen was a long way off and the letter might easily be lost, going so far.

The cab turned into King's Road. A little way along there was a crowd on the pavement and the cabby reined in, with leisurely curiosity. Pippin looked.

A stocky, close-cropped young man with a bruise under one eye trembled in the grip of the officer who handcuffed him. It was Doll's Harry. Pippin fell back, yet again she looked. Harry had just finished quod, not a six months. This would set Doll going — it would mean another heart attack. She cared about Harry. Pippin leaned forward, instinctive sympathy moving her. Cringing, seeking compassion from some one in the curious crowd, Harry's clever, rat-like, but now terrified face turned from one to another, uselessly of course, and then he saw Pippin. For one fearful instant she waited for him to proclaim their acquaintance. His look changed from seeking to hostile hate. He snarled and lurched ahead as the officer plunged through the crowd. But along the pavement above other heads, came bobbing a purple feather, waved wildly among them, and a woman who was Doll,



screamingly calling upon the goodness of God to save her Harry, fell upon him, seized at the manacled hands, bent her face and gnashing teeth to them, gasped and sank at his feet to the pavement.

The crowd fell back.

Pippin rose in the cab; her two hands gripped in a sort of benediction, as she looked; Doll's blue lips were parted, her half-closed lids showed a rim of staring white, her head lay still, pillowed in untidy hair and dingy purple finery. Harry bent, looked, drew back, shaking.

"Curse yer," he whined, savagely struggling with the policeman, "now look what you've done by your injustice! She's —"

Pippin silently stole from the cab on the other side and hurried away.

## CHAPTER XVIII



OR several days Dandy's master, Mr. Bertram Granville, had been in an agreeable mood, his nerves steady, his mind tranquil, though full of the new play he was writing.

"'Ow was your lordship's sole, this morning, if you please, sir?" Dandy asked, happily marking, as he took away Mr. Granville's breakfast tray, that only the bone of the sole remained.

"Perfect, thank you, Dan," the master answered, rubbing the top of his head where Dandy reported new hair coming in; "there was a touch of heaviness to the toast, perhaps."

"Thank *you*, sir. It won't occur again, I'll look out for that!" Dandy balanced the tray on one hand and with the other pinched a piece of toast that was left there. "S'truth it is!" he said. "Jackson shall 'ear of it!"

He took the tray out and then came back. Moving about very quietly and with the most lightly buoyant step, he made everything ready for Mr. Granville to start in at his writing. Mr. Granville himself kept the key to the drawers that contained

his manuscripts, so he rose from the chair by the window, where he liked to breakfast, unlocked the top drawer of a big chest and took out the sheets of his new play. He carried them to the table.

Dandy was watching his master very closely this morning, awaiting opportunity. And Mr. Granville showed evidence of being in one of his pleasantly gossipy humors; he did not at once begin to write, this sign being the one upon which Dandy always departed quickly, to keep silence without.

"How's Tidberry's young one?" the playwright asked, lighting his pipe.

"Gone, sir!" Dandy answered.

Mr. Granville flinched slightly.

"Dead, do you say, Dan?"

"Yes, your lordship, last midnight. Same hour it came, sir, about five weeks ago — it was always ailing, Tidberry said."

Mr. Granville was very sensitive to the troubles of others. He stood looking solemnly at the floor.

"I should n't 'ave told you, sir. I 'ope you're not upset. They've eight more, sir. Tidberry is bearing up well; they're not really shocked, not tremendously so, sir," Dandy said.

"We don't owe him anything, Dan?"

"Not it!" said Dandy. "'E was all paid up out of the windfall, sir."

Mr. Granville nodded. He rubbed the top of his head.

"'E's that proud, too, sir, over what 'e's done for your 'air, Tidberry is — there's no joy without some sorrow, in course!" Dandy went on.

His master smiled a little as he tied tighter the cord of his flowered silk dressing-gown.

"'E 'opes to mike a Court 'air dresser of 'imself as a result of your 'air's growing in so, sir!"

Mr. Granville nodded thoughtfully and sat down at the table.

"We're hardly anything in debt, are we, Dan?" he asked, toying with a quill.

"The windfall put us on our feet, you remember, sir! Anythink owing now can stand for a six mont's simple enough — our few debts are all big 'uns and understood by the creditors, they being accustomed to dealing with gentlemen."

Mr. Granville tapped the manuscript of his new play with the quill pen and said calmly:

"This is as good as taken! I've written this play to order though I never should have thought I could!"

"No!" cried the astounded gentleman-in-waiting.

"I could n't be sure when I began it. I was n't even sure until last night — that it was right. I can't usually take other people's ideas, y' know, but I have and I've carried 'em out!"

Dandy waited. Every now and then Mr. Granville explained things to him. Sometimes he told him nothing for weeks and weeks.

"That jolly old fat-head manager, Hamilton, had an idea and at first I could n't see it — afterward I did. It grew on me; it seemed good. I've swot away — I've carried it out." He waved his hand lightly. "It's all but done. The finishing is that simple —" he rose and blew some smoke from his pipe out over the room, "it's a cat and mouse thing, the finishing, I'm just holding off." He thought a minute and put down his pipe. "I believe I'll lock it up again," he said, eying the manuscript. "I'll hold off finishing till night — I'll dress now and go for a canter in the park, Dan!"

"Right!" agreed Dandy; "it'll do you good, sir."

Dandy opened the drawer and his master took up the play and locked it lovingly away. Then he walked to the window where he stood looking out. A light cough from Dandy caused him to turn.

"What's on your mind, Dan?"

"I've been wanting to tell you, I'm getting married soon, sir, if you please!" said the gentleman-in-waiting.

Mr. Granville started.

"Dan —" he said.

He stood looking at Dandy for some time. There before him stood little Dan, grown into a tall young man, without his master ever having realized it. And he had announced that he was getting married.

"I've been waiting these several days to tell you, sir," Dandy said.

"Well, well, well!" said the playwright wonderingly. "By gad!"

"Yes, your lordship!"

There was another interval of silence then Mr. Granville asked:

"Dan, did you pay yourself out of the wind-fall?"

"Yes, your lordship!"

"When are you to be married?"

"As soon as ever she will consent, sir. I 'ope to bring it about within the month," Dandy answered with a hopeful smile.

"Dan," his master said solemnly, "take a month's notice; you're discharged —"

"Your lordship!"

"My boy, you can't afford to keep on for me if you're to take a wife. Alone, we shifted, but your wife would n't put up with that!"

"I'll not leave you, sir," said Dandy quietly. "Not if that's all the reason; not so long as me services is satisfactory to you. *She* would n't 'ear of it. She knows all about you, sir — understands you exactly. In fact," continued the gentleman-in-waiting, "she'd 'elp us. You'd like 'aving 'er 'ere. She's very 'andy and full of saving ideas! She's that neat and quiet in manners, too — Oh, sir, she'd never 'ave me, if she thought she'd come between

us! You're putting an obstacle before me, sir — she'd never come between us!" repeated Dandy.

The playwright looked very serious, as he stood thinking.

"I 'ope I'm not vexing you, sir!"

"You are, indeed! But I won't think of myself; I am thinking what is best for you, Dan," answered his master.

He could hardly think of himself without Dandy.

"It's 'ere, sir," continued Dandy. "She's bar-maid now at The Rose and Crown. I don't like it. It's too public —"

Mr. Granville looked up.

"Oh, she's awright, sir, a sensible gal enough and keeps 'er plice!" said Dandy.

"But you want to get married," his master mused.

"Yes, your lordship, if you please, sir, I think it'd be as well not to put it off as I sees no reason meself for doing so, sir!"

"Are you sure she's the right one; sure you are ready to settle down for life — you are young — for life, Dan?"

A tender smile of certainty lit the youthful face of the gentleman-in-waiting.

"I s'y, sir, would it be too much to ask your lordship, as she's maybe to enter your service in a way, like — would it be too much for you to drop in at The Rose and Crown — and see 'er? — next door

The Royal Theater of Varieties, it is, sir — High Holborn?"

The playwright shook his head. "I'm too busy!"

"I very much wish you to see 'er, sir!" begged Dandy.

"Very well!" agreed Mr. Granville.

Dandy heaved a sigh, a sigh of certainty that all would be well when his master saw Pippin.

"You said you would dress for riding, did n't you, sir?" Dandy said, bringing his mind back to his duties.

But his master was still thinking.

"It's a rum way to treat me, Dan. There's nothing for it but that old house out near Walingford, if you've got to go and get attached. I thought you considered me a little. I'll have to give up these rooms and settle down there — or give you up!" he threatened savagely.

After a moment he grumbled: "I'll start a country establishment sort of thing. Good for my health, I suppose."

"An' us to do for you, sir?" inquired the eager Dandy.

"Why *should* I keep you on? You don't consider me, my man," roared the playwright moodily.

"You with a missus!"

The idea filled Dandy with joy in spite of his master's wrath.



"I'll get out your riding things, sir!" he said, hoping a canter in the park would brighten the prospect for Mr. Granville. "And if you'll just drop in and look her over, sir—before you send me away, sir—"

"Who's sent you away?" Mr. Granville demanded, and Dandy hurried out to fetch the riding togs.

A little later his master was ready for his canter in the park.

"I've forgot to mention it, sir," Dandy said as he followed to the door, "but they's a little pl'y goes on at The Royal Theater of Varieties to-night, an' if I'm not needed, I'm dropping around to see it. You might care to hear about it. 'Miss Nestor's Necklace' is the name of it—"

"What?" cried Mr. Granville, "the windfall?"

"Never, sir!"

"I tell you it is!" insisted the playwright. "A little American playlet—sold it to Percy Claverling—"

"You never told me, sir," reminded Dandy. "I never 'eard the title of the windfall from you, sir—nor who got it. I thought it was out of town, s'truth!"

"Gad," said Mr. Granville, "so it's on to-night. Upon my word!" he laughed. "Wonder what'll come of it. I'll go—no, I've got something else on—you'll go, Dan! Don't forget; if it should

make a hit, we'll get some more out of it, you know!"

"The leading woman, sir, is an American. She's a personal acquaintance — a friend of my young woman's. I understand she's looked to, to make the play a hit!"

"This is interesting!" Mr. Granville said.

"No. You never told me the windfall had to do with an earl, sir!" said Dandy, a shade of reproach in his tone.

"Oh, Clavering does n't bother much about that; he's out to make money!" Mr. Granville hurried off mumbling.

That night found Dandy at The Rose and Crown. The little barmaid's eyes were round and dark with excitement when her lover entered.

"You *did* manage to come!" she cried happily as he raised a shiny top-hat to her.

"I s'y, dear, 'ere's a bit of news," he whispered, leaning over the bar quickly. "This play, 'Miss Nestor's Necklace' is the windfall — the one I told you of, me master wrote it!"

"Is it truth you s'y?" she gasped. "Oh, Dandy-boy — why 'ave n't you told me?"

"Never knew," he said. "Just got on to-d'y!"

Then he explained hurriedly; Pippin listened, keeping alert for any one who might be needing her attention.

"You've give me a turn," she said. "I feel all

the more responsible now — oh 'Eaven send us stren'th —"

The buttons rose and fell in the even row down her snug little bodice.

"Listen, dear," Dandy went on after a quick look round, "I've come 'ere to-night first and foremost to ask you to nime the day. I've come for that more than anythink else. Name it quick — make it soon, I'll not be put off —"

He caught the hand that mopped a cloth over the bar.

"Oh, Dandy, Miss has been most ill, all d'y and so in a fright — I can't think to-night, old chap!"

"You've got to," said Dandy. "Nime the d'y, or I will!"

"I can't leave Miss Lawrence — her stren'th is spent," she says; "more than she knew!"

"I give you a month," Dandy said with finality. "Then we'll be married an' go to live in a manor."

Pippin fell back, but he still held her hand. He looked sharply round the room again, drew something from his pocket and when he released the little hand, there encircled her third finger a slender gold band set with a gem of heavenly blue.

"Oh!" she cried out.

The landlord passing her at that moment and being irritable after suddenly awaking from a nap, gave her a light rap on the shoulder blade.

"Oh," she said again, but pressing the turquoise to her cheek.

After this in spite of her duties she stole frequent glances at her lover who hovered happily near. She saw that he had added a monocle to his toilette; how he reflected his master's success! The top-hat was new to her, too. Mr. Granville never gave his gentleman-in-waiting anything shabby.

"Blow-me-tight, if you ain't the double of a lord!" she once managed to tell him proudly.

Suddenly the Earl of Clavering came into the barroom. Mr. Dicky Rogers followed him closely.

"Brandies and sodas—two!" his lordship demanded. "Now, Dick," he said, turning to Mr. Rogers, "are you certain of your red light and the properties?"

"Everything under my control is in shape, absolutely," Dicky returned confidently, "absolutely!"

"Then that's all right!" but his lordship's excitement was most apparent. "I admit I'm anxious," he said. He pulled at his fair mustachios. He placed his monocle and regarded the barmaid.

"I say!" Dicky Rogers with a wry face looked at her too. "What filthy mess is this?"

"What *have* you done, young woman?" questioned Lord Percy, peering into his glass. "I said brandy and soda."

Pippin stared at them.

"Lor' love us!" she cried, coming to her senses;

"I 've gone and put bitters in 'em, I 'm that worked up, sir, thinkin' about my Miss. Oh, sir, she went over it all the last thing before I left 'er and never missed a word from A to Zed or a bit of that which she calls business an' action. But she says to me — she says, 'Pippin, they 's such a thing as stige fright. Oh, Gawd 'elp us, sir, what ever it is —"

His lordship put down his glass and took several turns about the bar. Other patrons gave some cutting orders, which were followed by commands from the landlord that brought the preoccupied Pippin sharply to the peril of her position.

"Give me a stout," demanded Mr. Rogers crossly. "I 've got to be off. I never wanted this American —"

"The play goes on in half an hour, Pippin," whispered his lordship presently, coming back to the bar. "Realize that! Do you advise sending Miss Lawrence a glass of wine and a biscuit? She looked very white."

"No, your lordship, she 'd never touch it sir, I know. She wants to keep 'er head, not lose it."

"Perhaps you 're right," he said. "And after all she 's so determined and clever — she knows what she 's about!"

But the earl was striving to reassure himself. His leading lady had seemed on the point of a breakdown. She had closed herself in her dressing-room demanding to be left alone.

"My poor Miss," Pippin whispered the Earl. "You see she 'd 'ad a long worry before this and it's telling now, sir!"

But his lordship consulted his watch and hurried away.

The Royal orchestra began playing "Way Down South in Dixie."

"There!" cried Pippin. "'Eaven send 'er stren'th and keep off the stige fright!"

Dandy leaned over the bar.

"Keep your eye open for a chanct to 'ave a look in," he whispered and joined the others crowding back into the theater.

The gruff voice of the landlord startled Pippin.

"It's 'is lordship's wish you step in an' see a bit o' this play. Everythink being quiet 'ere for the moment, go along!"

Pippin did not heed the uncordial leave. Hurrying across the barroom, she slipped into The Royal lobby. It was nearly a full house. She looked over the audience. She gazed at the boxes. Packed, every one of them! Gentlemen filled them all, except one; it was the stage-box. Here the Earl of Clavering's anxious face was to be seen at the back, while other men stood and ladies were seated in the foreground. All leaned forward, the curtain rose!

The scene was a room. There were the long red curtains through which Miss Lawrence — Miss

Nestor would come. Miss Lawrence had over and over rehearsed this entrance at home, slipping behind the butter muslin curtains that partitioned off Pippin's apartment and then stealing out as she would now in the play. Once she had rehearsed, with Pippin for the burglar. Pippin knew all of Miss Nestor's lines. She trembled and clasped her hands as two men came upon the stage—a real gentleman and a burglar disguised as a gentleman. She would never have thought that one could look so gentlemanly and turn out so badly as the burglar was to do. Then she thought of how it was all Dandy's master's play, and his doing entirely. But she could not keep this in mind. It was very real. It went on rapidly. Miss Nestor made her first entrance, wearing a beautiful gown of shimmering satin and *the necklace!* She was giving a ball in another part of her house. The music from the ballroom could be heard. It was very real! A little applause from the boxes greeted Miss Nestor's entrance.

She stopped, disconcerted, almost lost. The pit hissed, "Sh! Sh!"

Pippin wrung her hands. A lump rose in her throat. Miss Nestor spoke, almost inaudibly. "Louder!" was cried. The actress halted, seemed to sway—an instant's deathly stillness. Then with a new grip on herself, she recovered her audience and went on! Pippin forgot that she knew Miss

Nestor's lines, she might never have heard them, now she was so carried away with the play. It went on thrillingly. Pippin was so lost that she hardly knew when Dandy found her and stopped close beside her, holding her hand.

They stood together, watching eagerly.

Then came the part that the poster depicted. The lights were lowered and in darkness the real gentleman sat looking over the necklace. It was an heirloom that Miss Nestor had entrusted to him. He was to sell it for her for she could have enough money to save the family honor with. The gentleman regarded the precious stones of the necklace lovingly. Then he spoke fondly of Miss Nestor, revealing things she did not know. In the midst of this the burglar thrust his masked face in at the long window, and then he came in. He advanced, creeping, creeping — the victim, unconscious of his danger, all but in the robber's clutches. The red curtains parted, Miss Nestor, a vision of golden-haired loveliness, in trailing negligee, stole out — the audience breathlessly hushed. Miss Nestor fired, missed. The startled burglar turned, seized her! She screamed, struggled — another scream echoed hers, but the firm hand of Dandy quickly stifled it.

"Stow it, dear!" he whispered and grasped the shoulders of the excited Pippin, hurrying her back to the barroom.

"Blimy!" she cried, as she stood blinking and



staring up at him, "'ow real, 'ow grand it was! To think it was my Miss the whole time — oh, Dandy!"

"It's a go!" he said. "Take my word the master's little pl'y's a go — it is a windfall, awright, thanks to —"

Applause sounded loudly in the theater.

"My Miss Lawrence!" finished Pippin. "No sleep, no tea, 'ardly nothink but at it over and over, since the day the Earl sent for 'er, Dandy!"

They looked at each other. Dandy opened his arms, Pippin flew to them; it was a quick, happy embrace and the little barmaid slipped back to her place behind the bar to await the coming of the Earl of Clavering.

## CHAPTER XIX



LADY LAWRENCE was ready to go home. She stepped out of her dressing-room and found the Earl of Clavering and his cousin, little Lady Maude, just coming for her.

"All ready, dear?" asked Lady Maude. "Come along then. It is very black overhead and will rain soon, I fear. You are to go home in the brougham for we're going along in a friend's motor,—we must n't let you get wet."

"Rather not!" echoed his lordship.

Leonora laughed.

She had gone home nearly every night since the very first one of the play—almost three weeks ago, in the Clavering brougham, for the Claverings could not be too careful of their mascot. They all picked their way across the stage behind the drop-curtain that quivered with the top-notes of Number Nine. Lady Maude took Leonora's arm as they reached the stage door, for a tall gentleman who stood there, stepped forward, his eyes on Miss Lawrence.

"Ah, here you are, Bertie," greeted his lordship.

"Allow me, Miss Lawrence — at last, Mr. Granville the playwright, author of 'Miss Nestor's —'"

But Miss Lawrence and Mr. Granville had stared an instant, recognized each other, and were quickly shaking hands, laughingly.

"We've met before!" Mr. Granville said, turning to the Earl.

"Yes," Leonora told Lady Maude. "Mr. Granville walked into the back of my chair — in Mr. Toby Hamilton's office one day."

They both laughed again at the recollection.

"How very funny," little Lady Maude said with amusement. "And all this time Mr. Granville has n't known that he had met the leading lady of his own play."

"And had treated her rudely," said Miss Lawrence looking at him slyly. "But I am so relieved to see you again, for I have suspected you of being several people."

The playwright inclined his head.

"You're Dandy's master!"

The master nodded acknowledgment.

"The author of 'Miss Nestor's Necklace' — a very good little play —"

The playwright modestly raised his hand.

"But you are best known to me as a fellow-sufferer, seeking audience of His Managerial Highness, Mr. T. Hamilton —"

Mr. Granville looked sympathetic.

"I heard you give your name that day and it came back to me when I heard it again — oft repeated —"

"I say, you have been bored!" Mr. Granville said solemnly. "But," he added, "I *have* heard of Miss Lawrence, you know — not alone from my kind friends here. I have heard from one with, I believe, the soundest judgment that you are the best leading woman in London to-day!"

Miss Lawrence looked shyly but genuinely pleased as she turned to the Claverings.

"You see, Lady Maude," she said, "Pippin, the little barmaid at The Rose and Crown is also, at odd moments, *my* little maid —"

"And Dan, my man," added the playwright, "is getting married to the girl!"

They all laughed as the plot unraveled.

"How sweet!" cried Lady Maude.

"I've been up in Walingford leasing a manor for them," resignedly Mr. Bertram Granville went on, "that is partly why I've not been around here. I shall live with them there — Dan thinks it better for my health."

"Well, look here, old chap!" cried the Earl. "What's this I hear about you — you've sold a play to Toby Hamilton; he's bringing it out this autumn — am I right?"

Mr. Granville looked at them all with the happiest smile.

"Yes," he said, "you're right! That's the real thing I've been so jolly busy about too. But now it's done — all settled and signed!"

Miss Lawrence offered him her hand quickly.

"Congratulations!" cried Lady Maude.

"I have thought disrespectfully of Mr. Hamilton," he admitted. "I hardly deserve the good fortune. I cursed my foolishness for swotting at *his* idea, but I worked it out!"

He stood, looking suddenly youthful, happy and grateful.

"And there'll be some money from 'The Necklace,'" recalled the Earl.

"Yes," little Lady Maude added, as she took Leonora's arm again, "*you've* made us all some money, my dear, out of that. Without you —"

"A fizzle!" cried the Earl decidedly.

Mr. Granville would have added more praise but Leonora declared she must go, to be home before Pippin, who was given to worrying about her.

So they all hurried to the brougham and at the last moment, Lady Maude said:

"We want you to come with us up the river tomorrow, if it's fine. It will do you good — you're looking too white, my dear. Will you?"

"And you'll join us, Granville, what?" added the Earl.

"Yes!" Lady Maude insisted, "please do, Mr. Granville!"

The playwright, regretful, could not, but Leonora said she would go, so they arranged an early meeting for the next day.

Leonora sat thoughtful during the ride to Jubilee Court. She liked the Claverings. She was happy to be so appreciated by them — for she had tried conscientiously in the little play. She was very happy, too, in her own hardly won success. There had been some nice notices about her and another better engagement at a big theater in London might result. She might even get to lead in one of them. She recalled that soon the Clarks would be coming back to London — Elvira and Sid Long. She would be glad to have them see her play *Miss Nestor*; even at the little old Royal — it was London! Then they could tell Charlie she was playing a lead in London. She had not written him about it. She had not written to him at all since her letter severing all ties. And there had been nothing very lately from him.

Somehow, she reflected, her success was not making her as happy as it should. She was happier in the Claverings' happiness she believed — and even in little Pippin's and Dandy's; she thought a good deal, too, of Elvira Clark and Sid Long, enjoying the continent together!

Then she laughed! These people were all in love and had each other. They had chosen and — she had chosen! Yet strangely she did not find the de-

sired consolation in this. She wondered suddenly if Charlie Browne had found some one else!

She sat up sharply at the thought. The rain had begun and she saw that her skirt was wet for she had not noticed the rain coming in at the open window of the carriage. In a few minutes more she was at home; she went slowly up the stairs to the room, but paused as she heard some one talking. It was Pippin's voice. Leonora waited a moment.

"Passed the Lizard, touched at Fishguard, touched at Queenstown, due at Sou'hamton—" Pippin broke off the monotonous drone, crying, "Strike me balmy if I can make it out!"

Leonora opened the door and went in. Pippin's perturbed face appeared over a newspaper.

"I never 'eard the carriage! I was reading a bit, Miss," but she crumpled her paper. "I've been looking out for any more press notices o' you!"

She hurried to assist Miss Lawrence.

"You've got your skirt wet; does 'is lordship's brougham let in then?"

"It lets in when the window is open," smiled Leonora, "and I neglected to close it. I was thinking of —"

"I shall light a fire, Miss, you're as wet as ever you'd a-got coming 'ome on a bus! You'll get your death from it, then what'd his lordship s'y to *me*?"

In such haste was she that without her usual cere-

mony, Pippin fairly stripped Miss Lawrence of her outer garments and placed them on a chair near the grate where there was soon a fire crackling.

"It is chilly," admitted Leonora when Pippin had her seated with a glass of hot milk to drink.

"You 're wanting your 'eavy bath-gown, Miss," Pippin said and pointed to the trunk standing under the window, which had come from Mrs. Penley's more than a week ago.

Leonora nodded and Pippin raised the top and looked through the trunk for the bath-robe. The trunk was her delight. She loved the pretty things it was her privilege to mend and look out for. She found the gown and while wrapping Miss Lawrence in it, looked very pensive.

"To think," she said a little sadly, "that Mrs. Penley don't know that the gal which robbed the box that night, fetched the clothes straight to you!"

Leonora did not at once reply. There had been a distressing letter from Mrs. Penley harshly accusing Miss Lawrence of having instigated Pippin's coup. But Leonora had not told Pippin.

"Some day," she now promised, "Mrs. Penley shall know! To-morrow, Pippin, I want you to go and see if our terms are to be met at the Queen Anne Mansions — will you? For I shall be gone for the day on the river with the Claverings, and —"

"Lor' love a duck!" fairly yelled Pippin.



A look from Miss Lawrence subdued her.

"Leave everything to me! I'll bring the Mansions to our terms!" she said with studied quiet, "I'll see they do the rooms just as you wish. Up the river, Miss, with 'is lordship!"

"And Lady Maude!" added Leonora.

"She's 'is cousin," Pippin said quickly, "only 'is cousin. You an' the Earl of Clavering, Miss —"

"And Dandy is to carry little Pippin off," Leonora said, "to a manor in Walingford!"

Pippin's brow clouded.

"You want to go, don't you, Pippin?" Leonora asked anxiously. "You want to be married to Dandy and go to live in the manor?"

"I'll not go for a time yet, Miss," Pippin said. "I would n't go an' leave you!"

"But, Pippin —"

"No, Miss!" There was firm resolution in the girl's tone and manner. "Dandy would never mike me go when I'm not ready. 'Ow do I know what 'll 'appen you, without me!" But a hopeful smile spread over her face slowly. "It won't be so long though, I fancy, till I knows you 're in safe 'ands."

She looked at the toe of her new boot and dug thoughtfully at a crack in the floor. Presently she inquired,

"What shall you wear, Miss, going on the river to-morrow with the Earl of Clavering?"

Leonora hid her smile, turning to the fireplace.

"Lady Maude likes my white serge," she said, "and the white sailor hat!"

"Lady Maude is a knowing 'un," exclaimed Pippin. "She knows what 'er cousin, the Earl, likes." She darted to the chest. "This rose is all that's left of 'is lordship's bouquet, Miss — it *do* last quite persistent!"

"Nonsense," Miss Lawrence exclaimed. "The flowers were given me by Lady Maude, Pippin. I told you so. Lady Maude was very proud of them for she grew them herself!"

At that moment a diffident knock sounded on their door.

"Your old friend and caretaker is come back, if you please," a sepulchral voice said without.

"Mrs. Crimmins!" chorused Leonora and Pippin.

"I 'eard your voices!" the caretaker whispered as Pippin opened the door.

She wore a large hat with feathers and roses and a black silk cape, set off by a feather boa.

"We 're back," she said, looking from Miss Lawrence to Pippin.

"Back from your 'oneymoon? An' you 're Mrs. Miles now!" Pippin rushed forward and embraced her.

Leonora rose and greeted the caretaker with a pat on her shoulder and a hand-shake.

"You do look glum though," Pippin said, stepping back; "ain't 'e awright?"

"Oh, quite!" the bride answered quickly. "'E's all 'e promised me he'd be and more. He's down stairs now waiting!"

Leonora slipped across the room for the rose.

"We must n't keep you, if he's waiting. Go right down to him and come up in the morning!"

"Thank you, Miss," Mrs. Miles said, managing a smile over the rose. "But the fact is, I've come up on account o' Sally. She's in the rooms—she's not even a-bed. I've seen her through the keyhole."

"Well, what's the row?" urged Pippin.

"You know Sally," the mother said.

"Come along, I'll see you through," cried Pippin.

Mrs. Miles brightened.

"Miles 'oped you'd come down, I 'ated to ask it—"

Pippin took her arm and hurried her to the door.

"Good night, Mrs. Miles!" called Leonora, waving the bride away.

They found the cobbler waiting in the lower hall. He hugged a large box. In spite of the situation he looked happy. He greeted Pippin as an old friend.

"I sent the boy a postal from Margate, telling 'im what I'd done," he whispered.

"'E got it," she answered, shaking hands with

him. "'E showed it to me, too. 'E said you was a sly old dog!"

Miles laughed with pleasure and followed to the door that barred the dreaded Sally.

"Wait," whispered Mrs. Miles with a hand on Pippin's arm. "Shall I tell 'er at onct or put it off a bit; the money me an' Miles invested in a thing we thought to be a certainty is —"

"Lost!" breathed Miles hoarsely. "It was a swindle. If I ever get my 'ands on the boulder —"

"Don't tell 'er to-night," said Pippin.

She knocked on the caretaker's door.

"Who's there?" came from within.

Pippin prodded the bride and she answered faintly.

"It's your mother, my dear."

The door opened quickly. Sally in a flannelette wrapper, her scant hair smoothed back in a pigtail, held up a lighted candle.

"Mother!"

"Sally!"

Sally stepped back and her mother entered with the aid of two pairs of unseen hands.

"Don't push so, Miles!"

Suddenly Miles himself seemed to be hurrying in faster than he desired. He struck at something behind him.

"Don't push," he whispered in his turn.

Pippin came forward, laughing.

"Now, Sally, be a lamb!" she whispered.

"Upon my word!" cried Sally, "you don't mean to s'y, Mother, you're afraid of your own daughter?"

But alas with every indication of this, Mrs. Miles hovered between her new husband and little Pippin.

"Per'aps I was wrong to go off without telling you, Sally — but I — I am very 'appy!" and the bride broke down and wept on the shoulder of the bridegroom. Over the three feathers of the bridal hat he looked yearningly for peace at Sally.

"Mother," Sally said, "stop that sniveling. If I'm in the way 'ere, I'll go 'ome late as it is — to-night. You did do wrong to elope. I have 'ad me work cut out 'ere too, to keep this berth for you; an' Taylor at me constantly to come home. You ought to kiss me, I should think!"

In a twinkling the shaking form was transferred by the loving hands of husband to daughter.

"Where's Mr. Miles to sleep to-night?" asked the practical Pippin.

"Over me shop — to-night," answered he, winking as the bride began to revive. "Good night, my dear. I'll leave you with — Sally!"

"Miles!" the bride said, drying her eyes to perform a belated ceremony, "this is me daughter Sally. The eldest child she is — Sally, Mr. Miles wishes to be a good father to you!"

Sally and the cobbler gripped hands with unexpected and heartfelt fervor.

"I'm off!" cried Pippin, backing toward the door. "Sally, you'll tell your mother everythink!" She stepped into the hall, paused and looked back. "Sally, some night very soon you're to see the pl'y. The Earl of Clavering 'as promised me a box. I've told the Earl I've ever so many friends an' so 'e s'ys — the Earl says, I am to 'ave a box!"

Pippin made an impressive pause. The bridegroom stared at her, the bride's moist eyes were wide with wonder.

"Good night all," said Pippin and closed the door, she was certain, upon a united family.

## CHAPTER XX



Y word your 'air can do a bit of gleamin'," Pippin cried, standing off for a less intimate view of her young lady's charms. "It's beautiful in them plaits. And the Earl of Clavering *will* be glad it's turned out fine, after the rain!"

Leonora sighed. To deny an infatuation that existed alone but persistently in Pippin's fond young fancy would probably involve them in a trying argument; Pippin was set about some things. Leonora took up her gloves, resignedly. At the door she met Sally Taylor.

"Good morning, Miss Lawrence. These letters were just brought round from The Royal by the Earl of Clavering's man — special!"

"Thank you, Sally!" Leonora took them and saw that one was for Pippin.

But she became quickly absorbed in her own.

The letter was addressed to her at The Royal Theater of Varieties. In the upper left-hand corner was the name of Toby Hamilton and the address of his office. She read:

*Dear Miss Lawrence,*

Will you call and see me one morning this week at ten? Your performance at The Royal reveals emotional power striking and unsuspected.

("This admission from you, oh King!" marveled Leonora *sotto voce*.) The letter continued:

I think you could handle Sophie in "Langdon's Reform," which goes *en tour* next month. Later the company returns to a West End playhouse, so you would secure a lead in London with the engagement.

Yours very truly,

T. HAMILTON.

Deaf to Pippin's babble, Leonora stood looking at the missive of flattering response to her success. Back, back over the past agonizing weeks went her mind. Back to the night that she stepped upon the stage, numb with panic over the lines there had not been time enough to commit — and lack of rehearsing; weak from ages of weary disappointment and insufficient food, beset by deadly inertia. How had she won! But that she had won, had never seemed so clear as now. Resentment, half revengeful, stole over her.

She darted back to her writing things and frantically penned an answer.

*Dear Mr. Hamilton:*

Nothing could be more gratifying than your recognition of my unsuspected ability. Your discovery a



little earlier would have spared me hunger. But experiences help every actress! I can't accept your offer, thank you, because when I close my engagement at The Royal I am going —

She paused, then wrote "home."

She signed, sealed and addressed her letter. She held it, thought, then dropped it in the top drawer of the chest upon which she had written.

"I can't send it," she admitted regretfully; "which is one of the most disappointing things I've ever known! At ten any morning this week—" she musingly recalled the appointment as she turned to Pippin who had been loudly clamoring for attention.

"Miss Lawrence!" Pippin begged. "Do look 'ere, Miss!"

Leonora looked, obliged to capture the paper she was requested to view before this was possible.

"Compliments of the Earl of Clavering," cried Pippin in a mad jig. "A pass for a box. 'E said I should give a box-party!"

Extreme in her joy she seized Sally Taylor.

"Go 'ome an' get ready, Sally! You're to bring Hal, the darling. Oh, I feel as though I should bust!"

"You're like to, if you keep on," laughed Sally Taylor, "though I really don't wonder at it myself."

"Mind now," Pippin instructed her. "Bring Mr. Taylor, your two little brothers and my little 'un."

Sally started backing out.

"The d'y after to-morrow! Come early, Sally; and mind you tog up. There 'll be your mother an' Miles and—"

"I'm off!" Sally showed excitement. "Good d'y, Miss Lawrence. Mother's coming up to see you soon."

"Mind, Sally, you doss up," pressed Pippin; "and, oh, Miss Lawrence, will you tell 'is lordship—"

"What a happy Pippin I have left at home," smiled Leonora. "I shall be sure to." Indulgently deciding to share her surprise, she added, giving Pippin the letter she had received, "You may read this and then put it in the top drawer."

Pippin read and reread the letter unbelievably. Then slowly, as it had come to Leonora, the thought of what this letter would once have meant came to her. She looked up, but she was alone.

"My dear Miss, waiting, waiting, waiting—'oping and 'oping, going again an' again—'er sweet countenance getting so white and strange like and never, nothink!"

Teddy chirped out merrily.

"Yes, old chap," she said, "it is awright now, but them was terrible d'ys!" But melancholy

merged with the cause into the past. She looked to the future.

Waltzing across the room, she dropped the letter in the top drawer, murmuring dreamily:

"Lady Leonora Clavering." The caretaker's voice, calling agitatedly from below, startled her rudely.

Hurrying down she found Mrs. Miles in the Court, talking to some one; Pippin looked, stopped and caught at the baluster for support. Mr. Charles Browne of Goshen, Indiana, had come! The living image of his photograph, he stood there on the pavement, straw hat in his hand, his eyes roving over the house.

Pippin stepped out. As he looked at her she became suddenly weak-kneed and giddy. But her heart cried out loyally for the Earl.

"I am Pippin," she said, looking up at the tall American. "I see you've come!"

Mr. Browne's face showed the greatest relief; he smiled at her.

"I got in this morning!" he said, stepping nearer the door. "I must see Miss Lawrence at once, I got your letter — what's the matter?" he demanded as the caretaker gave a startled gasp.

"I sent for you," Pippin said; "yes, sir! But — you've come too late, Mr. Browne!"

"Rather!" chimed Mrs. Miles, thinking she saw her cue.

"Too late — what do you mean?" thundered the gentleman so sharply that Pippin was alarmed.

"Well, you see, sir," she ventured, yet bold. "I sent for you, quite unknown to Miss Lawrence. If it ever gets to 'er that I did it, sir — well I don't know what, s'truth!"

"Do you mean she does n't want to see me?" asked Mr. Browne.

Pippin looked from the restive caretaker, back to the kind, puzzled face of the gentleman she had brought all the way from America. It did seem rather too bad.

"I am going to ask you, sir, to go away again," she said pleadingly. "You've come too late! I can't tell you 'ow it's been all these d'ys past. Why, sir, everythink Miss Lawrence 'as wanted an' *needed* an' nearly died for, she could n't get —" she put her hand on his arm timidly. "She needed you, sir, but you was n't 'ere! You did n't come. She wanted a engagement — she even wanted money for 'er rent, she wanted su'think to eat besides bread that was stale —"

"My God!" Mr. Browne cried, placing his hand over Pippin's.

"Yes," Pippin said, stepping back, "an' now, sir, when she needs nothink, when she's in clover, with a Lunnon engagement as a leading woman and a earl to go about with, everythink and everybody turns up — but too late!"

Mr. Browne folded his arms over his chest and his grave face was set.

"I did n't know!" he said.

"Well, she was n't evicted, if she *could n't p'y!*" the caretaker put in, shaking her dust-cloth vigorously round Mr. Browne. "I went aw'y partly not to see it done, too. If it 'd got to come to that, I left it for Sally and the agent." She smiled benignly.

Pippin frowned her to silence.

"What you going to do, sir? Will you go away? You would n't want to upset Miss Lawrence now she's going to be happy so soon, would you, sir? She's out now, up the river with the Earl, sir!"

"Do you mean she's going to marry him?" questioned Mr. Browne, with a quiet that alarmed Pippin.

She nodded faintly.

Mr. Browne turned and paced a few steps up and down the pavement.

"This is awful!" he muttered. "I did n't think she meant what she said in her last letter. And to think she's suffered and I did not know!"

He shook his head fiercely.

"If you 'll just go aw'y, sir, not to 'urt 'er worse, like—" begged Pippin softly.

"An earl—" he said unbelievably.

"Yes, sir," Pippin said. "The Earl of Clavering, 'e backs The Royal Theater of Varieties!"



"I didn't know!" he said

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She kept her eyes on Mr. Browne while she reached into her deep pocket. "'Ere's a clipping about 'er. Listen, sir!"

She read to him.

"'At The Royal Theater of Varieties is a very good little play entitled "Miss Nestor's Necklace." It might be termed a stirring one-act event of American ranch life. The playwright who modestly with'olds his nime from the public I learn on good authority to be the Earl of Clavering.' That's a mistake," Pippin interjected and continued reading. "'His lordship is fortunate in his choice of Miss Leonora Lawrence, who, as Miss Nestor, proves 'erself a young actress of unusual dramatic ability and 'as probably done much for the pl'y.'"

Mr. Browne's face was set. He made no comment but looked up and down the street and then up at the house.

"Genteel little plice she's 'ad 'ere," the caretaker murmured proudly. "Nothink, of course, like what I understand she's marryin'."

Mr. Browne consulted his watch and turned away. His back to them, he stood deep in thought, loathe to leave.

"You will go, sir," Pippin said and added as he did not move: "If you wants to see 'er, sir, and not be seen by 'er like, why, you could drop in at The Royal Theater of Varieties — about ten, sir. You'll no doubt see 'is lordship in the stige box."



Next door to The Royal is The Rose and Crown. I'm barmaid there — Miss Lawrence not needing me all the time."

Mr. Browne glanced at her, at the caretaker, looked over the house sadly, and lifting his hat walked away. Pippin looked after him. Irresolute she stood; if he turned round and came back, if he only looked back, she should beg him not to go! She should ask him in spite of the Earl of Clavering to return and see Miss Lawrence.

"Well," said Mrs. Miles, "you always seemed to me a person of sense. You did indeed! What was you thinkin' about when you sent for 'im, do yer know that?"

"I was balmy," Pippin said. "I was near mad thinking of 'ow to p'y the rent!"

"Some folks would be as well off not able to write," retorted the caretaker. "Now the fat 's in the fire. 'E 's not going off so simple as 'e came. 'E 's a lad that 's set in 'is way, like most men!"

"I don't know what to do!" admitted Pippin.

"Look 'ere," Mrs. Miles said, tapping Pippin's chest. "You got 'im 'ere — now get rid of 'im. If you want 'er to lose the Earl, as you s'y she 's got 'ooked —"

"Oh, no, she must n't lost *him* — the Earl," Pippin said. "I *must* send Mr. Browne off!"

"Glad to 'ear you talk sense!" approved Mrs. Miles.

"When 'e 'is gone, I 'll tell Miss!" Pippin edged away.

In this dilemma she wished to be alone to reflect.

"I 'll be up shortly to 'ear more about it," promised the caretaker. "I 'm just going to drop round to the shop to tell Miles!"

Pippin reached her room and for some time sat, hands in her lap, thinking. At last sighing heavily, she took up some sewing. The white muslin and lace edging that she took from the drawer, Leonora had given her and the lingerie for Pippin's trousseau was under way.

But she could not work; she was thinking of Miss Lawrence. She recalled the day in Temple Gardens. Each day since was jotted in her memory never to be erased. Each day since had been to her, gain. All the little things that she had learned from Miss Lawrence who never had seemed to teach, she thought of now, from the way to hold her knife and fork to the big things like honor! Honor was the hardest thing to grasp — definitely. It was something even apart from taking people's purses, or taking spirits. She squirmed in her chair. She was very uncomfortable about Mr. Browne's coming. But again she reflected, she had sent for him without being told to do so! Was she not then free to dispose of him? Anyhow she could not sit still and decided to slip off at once and see about the

flat Miss Lawrence was taking in Queen Anne Mansions.

Reaching the corner she saw a few repeated puffs of smoke, a pipe, the peak of a cap and the tip of a nose and chin, projecting from the other side of the lamp-post. She stole up softly but the alert Dandy sprang out, caught her arm and planted a kiss on her apple-cheek.

"Saw your shadow, dear," he laughed.

"You're *too* cute," she laughed back. "Come along then an' 'elp me attend to a bit o' business!"

They locked arms and started along gaily.

"*I've got a motto*," sang Dandy, "*always merry an' bright*."

They passed a doorway from which a sallow face under purple plumes had been wont to pop out at her, as she walked with Dandy. Pippin had told him of the end. Poor Doll!

"*I've simply gotter sing*—" tunelessly persisted Dandy.

"We're going to move, Miss an' me, to a flat!" she chatted.

"You'd better be looking out for some one else to take your place with the young lady, Victoria A.," he answered. "You've only another week, y' know!"

"Stow it!" cried Pippin.

"Wotcher mean, dear?" he asked, sobering and looking down at her.

"I 'ave promised — but if I asked you to wait a bit longer — if I asked you to think of your master, so as to put yourself in my plice, like — Miss do need me, Dandy!" Pippin said anxiously. "You would n't leave Mr. Granville if 'e needed you?"

"I 'll inquire about some one to take 'er off your 'ands," said Dandy with finality; "we need n't talk of it!"

"Dandy —"

"It's all settled," he said. "You an' me is to go to put the manor in order in a week's time. You an' me, dear — and we're to 'ave the little brother Hal! We 'll be 'itched in the morning an' off we goes in the afternoon. Now, 'ave I a good master?"

Added happiness came with this good fortune for little Hal. Dandy's master was kindness itself and she was for the time swayed to think of her future responsibilities as Dandy's missus and the house-keeper of a manor.

"'E is good, Dandy, your lordship is — an' to think of having a place to keep little Hal with us!"

But having brought the affairs of Miss Lawrence to a climax, only fatally could her management be now withdrawn.

"You see Miss Lawrence *do* seem to need me su'think awful!"

"It 'll all come right!" persisted Dandy.

That evening the Earl of Clavering did not come

into the barroom until late. He was, if possible, in even lighter spirits.

"We had a splendid day," he told Pippin, over his brandy and soda. "It's done Miss Lawrence good too. She's got quite a little color and admitted that she felt sleepy. She says she's not been sleeping well!"

"Oh," cried Pippin, "she never told me!"

"Never mind," said the Earl, "a few all-day outings with us —"

"Oh, yes, sir! Yes, indeed, sir — they'll set 'er up, your lordship, won't they? And she's going again soon?"

The little barmaid's eyes glowed. The Earl nodded back.

"You got your box?" said he.

"'Ow can I ever thank you enough, sir, you're too good!"

"Fill it up," he said; "let them all come!"

His lordship *was* in good spirits. But suddenly like a shadow, over his lordly happiness, appeared the tall, broad figure of Mr. Charles Browne of Goshen, Indiana. He came from The Royal into the barroom and looking squarely at the barmaid, he stepped up to the bar, shoulder to shoulder with the Earl of Clavering.

"Give me a glass of cold beer!" he said.

"Good night!" said the Earl, turning away.

"Good night, your lordship," Pippin returned

pointedly, "I *am* glad Miss Lawrence enjoyed 'er-self to-d'y!"

She glanced at Mr. Browne, drew the beer, and put it down for him. He was looking over his shoulder at the departing Earl.

"That's 'im!" said Pippin.

Mr. Browne's face grew heavy and dark. He glared at the glass of beer, took it up and drank.

The door opened and Dandy came in from the street. At the same moment Mr. Browne put down his glass and leaned forward.

"I am going away," he said. "I thought I would n't, but —"

Pippin knew this encounter with the Earl had done it.

"She broke it off in that last letter —" he admitted, pondering miserably. "Well," to Pippin, "do as you like about telling Miss Lawrence I came!"

He turned away and went slowly out. Pippin looked at Dandy. There was a question in his sharp glance.

"S'truth," sighed Pippin. "'E's a bloke from America. Mr. Browne from Goshen, Indiana. 'E's come to see Miss Lawrence, to take 'er aw'y, like enough, an' I've told 'im str'ight an' plain — Miss Lawrence is getting engiged to the Earl of Clavering. I've got Mr. Browne to go aw'y!"

"*You've* got 'im to?" Dandy thrust his head for-

ward unbelievably. "You've got him to go, and Miss Lawrence not knowing 'e's 'ere! She's getting engird to the Earl?"

He glanced at her with desperate vexation as he saw what she had been up to—and the Earl of Clavering about to marry his cousin, Lady Maude!

"Now you've made a bit o' trouble," he sternly rebuked her, turned and swung out of the barroom by the street door, just in time to see a cab driving away with the American inside.

"Hi, cabby!" hailed Dandy.

The driver did not hear, but a lounge ran up.

"Want the gentleman inside?"

"Yes, old covey," Dandy said. "I did! Now where in blazes do you fancy 'e's going?"

"To the Savoy hotel!" said the lounge. "I 'eard the address!"

Dandy threw him a penny and set out with all the fleetness of his nimble limbs.

As Dandy fled from the bar, he had unknowingly brushed past his master, who attributed the departure to shyness. Mr. Granville, smiling at this, stepped forward and ordered something to drink. But before she could serve him, he said slyly to the little barmaid: "I hear you are willing to retire from this position of responsibility, to become my housekeeper!"

"Oh, sir, thank you, sir," gaped Pippin. "Then you're Mr. Granville!" She viewed him with

instant approval and suddenly with her most winning smile, leaning forward, begged: "You'll give us a little time, sir?"

"Time?" queried the playwright. "I thought this day week —"

"Dandy's quite determined on it. 'E would n't leave *you* though, with no one to look out for you; Miss Lawrence is quite as needing as you are, asking your pardon, sir!"

The playwright pursed his lips in a low whistle. "Well, well," he smiled. The girl amused him and suddenly he leaned forward, promising whisperingly.

"You shall not leave Miss Lawrence until she can spare you — there!"

"Oh, thank you, sir, thank you a thou—"

"Your conscientiousness is tremendous!" he said. "It is commendable — and Miss Lawrence must be looked out for, first of all. We will see to that!"

Seeing the joyous results of his promise, Mr. Granville laughed again in his big way and disregarding the shilling put down for a drink he walked away.

"Now look at that!" the barmaid cried, as she discovered the money. "But, my eye! I *do* like Mr. Granville!"

The room was empty and the landlord nodding sleepily. She pocketed the money.



"I'll give it to Dandy for expenses of the manor," she vowed, bustling about her preparation for departure.

When she reached home, she found Miss Lawrence already there. She was sitting as she had come in, rather wearily, before the grate in which there was no fire.

"Are you cold, Miss?" asked Pippin anxiously.

"Well, chilly perhaps," Leonora said. "I could have lighted the fire. You spoil me terribly, Pippin. It will be good for me to be left alone!"

Pippin only hurried to touch a match to the wood she had laid. "So you 'ad a pleasant d'y, Miss?"

"Yes," Leonora said. "We had a lovely time and I am dead tired. I like the Claverings! I may tell you a secret, too, Pippin—"

"Oh, Miss, what?" the girl's eager little face came close to Miss Lawrence's, her hands clasped ecstatically across her breast.

"Lady Maude and the Earl of Clavering are to be married very soon!"

Pippin drew back.

"Oh, Miss Lawrence!" she cried in an agony of disappointment. "Then what—whatever about you?"

"You foolish child," exclaimed Leonora.

"O Gawd, Miss!" Pippin wept; "I wish, I wish I was dead!"

"Why, Pippin!"

"But Miss, Mr. Browne, 'e —"

Leonora started.

"What about Mr. Browne?"

"'E came — to-d'y — from Goshen —"

Leonora rose like a cold white statue.

"I sent for 'im to come — when 'e got 'ere, I sent 'im aw'y!"

"*You* sent for Mr. Browne — he has been here and you sent him away?"

Pippin stirred roughly the tranquil curls on her forehead.

"I did, Miss — but," she cried, looking up wildly, "you had wrote 'im su'think 'arsh. He said you did — it was n't all me. You 'd sent 'im a letter —"

"Let me understand," commanded Leonora, gripping the girl's shoulders. "Mr. Browne came — came here and you sent him away?"

Pippin blurted out guilty assent, her shoulders quivering in the painfully tense-fingered grasp.

"What right had you?" cried Leonora. "How dared you? How dared you — are you privileged to interfere with my very life's happiness — and his? Oh, what a fool I have been! I have put myself actually in your keeping, in your meddling child's hands —"

"I thort it was for your life's 'appiness I sent 'im orf!"

"*What*, oh, what have you done to me?"

Leonora released her, turned to the mantelshelf, her head sinking upon her arms, sobs came fast and furious.

"What '*ave* I done?" Pippin questioned with fearful uncertainty.

Her hands groped yearningly over the shaken form. But slowly she drew back, seeing in its enormity the thing she had done. The weeping filled the room, despairingly. Numb, cold and deathly frightened, stood Pippin, trying to think. Suddenly to her ears came footsteps and voices.

"'Ere's Miss Lawrence's room. Can you see, sir? One more step, there! I told 'er, as you would n't go so easy!"

It was the caretaker speaking.

"Would n't go? of course not. There's been a misunderstanding."

"Dandy!" shrieked Pippin.

She sprang to the door, but was fairly trampled back by the advance of none other than Mr. Charles Browne.

"Molly!" he cried. He did not say Leonora.

"Charlie!" came in a sob of answering gladness. His arms opened, closed and clasped her to him.

"Dear little runaway Molly!"

"Charlie," she still sobbed. "I was afraid you had gone!"

"After this, Victoria Alexandra," sternly spoke

Dandy looking in at Pippin, "perhaps you'll mind your own affairs!"

But she stared as though the faint forms there in the flickering candle-light were only ghosts.

"Perhaps she will, but she won't," added the caretaker officiously.

Pippin answered looking out at Dandy contritely: "I will, s'elp me!"

## CHAPTER XXI



“It is too long for you by just the width of one ruffle, Pippin!” Miss Lawrence stepped back to survey the little figure standing on a chair in her recent gift of the pink ruffled frock.

“Then I’ve to lose a whole flounce, Miss!” regretted Pippin, twisting for a better view in the small mirror over the chest. “I always feared I’d ’ave cause to be sorry for not growing a bit more!”

“This is a time for nothing but happiness,” reminded Leonora. “Now get your scissors and begin!”

“Right!” Pippin gathered the skirt round her and jumped to the floor. “’Ear the flutist, Miss — practise *do* make perfect!”

Leonora was busy packing and could not attend.

She came upon a pair of pink slippers and held them up, looking at Pippin. Her eyes grew rounder, raised to Leonora’s questioningly. Leonora nodded. Pippin came forward.

“Oh, Miss —” she took the slippers tenderly. “I’ve often looked at ’em an’ felt the satin. You are too good!”

"Now," said Leonora, "you will be all in pink — a little pink bride!"

"I ort to be very 'appy," Pippin said, folding this last gift to her.

"Ought to be — Pippin?"

"I am 'appy, Miss." Pippin looked up at Miss Lawrence. "It's just a bit 'ard — letting you go, just a bit!"

Two tears trembled on her lashes, rolled down the apple-cheeks and splashed on the sole of one slipper.

"I'd never ask for nothink better than to stay and do for you. It's been so different since that day I found you, Miss. It's very 'ard — giving you up!"

"Giving me up to happiness!" reminded Miss Lawrence. "When I *want* to be given up to go back with Mr. Browne to Goshen, Indiana? And I'll write often, please, ma'am —"

Pippin laughed in spite of her grief.

"I *want* to give you up to 'appiness," she admitted, "and that do seem to be Mr. Browne!"

"It is!" exclaimed Miss Lawrence.

Pippin was marveling:

"'Ow quick it'll be over! You're Miss Lawrence now; you go out, meet Mr. Browne, and in another hour you are Mrs. Browne!"

"Yes, it's very simple." But Leonora blushed happily.

"If it 'ad n't been for Dandy, though, Miss!" Pippin recalled. "'Who's that?' he says to me, when 'e saw Mr. Browne walking out last night. I tells 'im. Without a 'If you please,' Dandy walks out after the gentleman, his own master in the bar-room too, Dandy walks out —"

"I shall always love Dandy!" Leonora said.

"A near thing," Pippin admitted, with guilty recollection.

But Miss Lawrence began humming "Way Down South in Dixie." Wisely she must refrain from admitting that it was after all due to Pippin that Charlie Browne had come at all. And in a few more hours she and Charlie were to be married; that afternoon after the play. She bent her happy blushing face over the trunk. When last night, she had looked up from his comforting arms, Charlie had whispered: "Get your hat, Mollie!"

And down in the Court while they walked, how quickly she had told of all the past weeks of hope, vain endeavor, and despair. And at last success, but not happiness.

"I wanted you, Charlie," she told him honestly, gladly. "And I had to come way over here and suffer — to find it out!"

So he would not wait for anything more. She must take him now, he said. There was nothing to wait for and she wanted to take him — now.

"Not another tear!" she commanded, as look-

ing up, she saw Pippin shedding some in secret. "And I think the heels are too high for you on the pink slippers; Cobbler Miles can fix them."

"'E shan't touch 'em, please, Miss!" Pippin put them down carefully. "I must 'elp you or you 'll never get your packing done an' then what 'll Mr. Browne s'y?"

She was taking the things from the drawers, when she looked up at the wall over the fireplace. She crossed the room, moved a chair and stepping upon it reached for the picture of His Majesty, the King of England.

"Miss," she said, "I'd like you to 'ave His Majesty—to take 'im with you, back to Goshen, Indiana. Mar would wish it, too," she added quickly, seeing that Miss Lawrence seemed to hesitate. "Will you take 'im, Miss?"

She held out the picture, looking back over her shoulder at the Queen.

"They must part—like you an' me, Miss; King Edward goes with you, Her Highness stops with me!"

"Can Her Highness spare him? Can you, Pippin?"

Pippin nodded gravely and Leonora accepted His Majesty with all reverence and tenderness.

"Thank you, Pippin. I'll never part with the picture."

"In with 'im!" cried Pippin, and taking back



His Majesty, wrapped the picture carefully first in tissue paper, then in a pink silk kimono, and placed it tenderly in a nook in the trunk.

"And put the sofy cushion with the big 'H' on it, atop of 'im, Miss, to keep 'im safe—I'm so pleased," she sighed, "that there is su'think"—she paused, quick to realize beside the gratification of bestowing this treasure upon her friend, the superb benefit to her Sovereign's likeness. In the home of the Browne's low temptation would not abide. His Royal Highness could hang unmolested; there become forever disassociated with even a memory of the demon Drink! He would have been safe enough with her now—ah yes! Yet something about his going helped to dispel the past.

"My word! 'Ow time do go to-d'y," she cried as the clock on the mantel struck. "Sally will be along soon now."

"And I must hurry, too," added Leonora, bending over her trunk again.

But again Pippin stopped her.

"Miss," she whispered softly.

Leonora looked up. Pippin held up her finger.

"It's come true what Mrs. Crimmins—Miles I mean, said about the little room being lucky!"

They both stood silent. Teddy twittered happily. The kettle on the hob sang softly and from above the gentle queen looked down still smiling.

"Pippin! I s'y, Pippin!" It was the cry of Dad Raymond in the hall.

For a moment Pippin looked terrified, then her face cleared and she went to the door.

"Dad!"

"The sime," said he.

"Why, Dad—"

"Flossie sent 'em!" he told her, extending a bouquet of white marguerites, "with 'er compliments and thanks for the invitation."

Mr. Raymond coughed a little anxiously.

"Do I get it right that it's a box party you invites us to?"

"Right-O!" cried Pippin.

"I can't stop now," he said. "I've a chimney to sweep out and to get 'ome and washed up before time to start to the pl'y! An' Flossie draws me p'y! I'd be on the streets, if I did n't do what she says."

"I am glad you're so 'appy, Dad," said Pippin, hiding her smile in the marguerites. "Give my love to Flossie an'—"

"You won't let on I've said anythink?" he begged, "an', I s'y, Pippin, come round to tea, will yer?"

"Rather! S'long, Dad."

He went off, not like a henpecked husband, but with quite a jaunty air.

"An' 'e 'ad his tooth in," Pippin recalled with

satisfaction as she put the marguerites in a glass of water on the mantelshelf.

"That is a good sign," said Leonora. "It shows —"

"Flossie's got the upper 'and!" said Pippin.

Leonora laughed and catching up a shoe that she had overlooked, crowded it into the top tray and closed her trunk. She went to the mirror, tucking back a stray lock of hair and taking up her hat.

"Mr. Browne will come at any moment! There's lunch, then the fitting of my gown, hat and gloves to buy, all before the matinée!"

"Miss Lawrence," began Pippin, "I am going to tell you 'ow I feel 'ere!" The pit of her stomach seemed to be the seat of emotions with Pippin and she now indicated it gravely.

"I wanted you to 'ave the Earl. I was quite bashed when I found you was n't to. But the more I thinks of Mr. Browne—'is lovin' eyes when 'e talked o' you yesterd'y, his beautiful teeth when 'e laughed for seeing you last night! I am very pleased it's to be Mr. Browne after all!"

"Good!" cried Leonora. "There! There's some one in the hall now!"

But without ceremony the door was opened and the young visitor walked in.

"Hellow, Pippin, we've come to the pl'y!" greeted little Hal and flew to her open arms.

"Oh, Miss, feel 'im," she cried as she released the boy, to prod and sound his now firm and changed little body. "'E's as plump an' beautiful as a partridge—'ello, Sally!"

Sally Taylor appeared in the doorway.

"My eye!" approved Pippin, a little dazed however.

"Ain't Aunt Sally grand?" cried the happy boy.

Sally's bonnet had become a small bower of poppies. Her hair had acquired a kink that must last forever, the heavy bang meeting her faint brows evenly. A quantity of pinchbeck jewelry, chains, watch and two bead necklaces, was scattered over her slender person. Her gloves stopped far below the frill in her sleeve.

Standing on one foot she looked shyly at Miss Lawrence, and Pippin.

"You've sent me a shilling too much," she said, taking one from her purse.

"Not a bit," said Pippin with financial insouciance. "Hal is 'alf fare from your plice."

"You need n't have done it—not after this rare treat," insisted Sally, letting the shilling drop back into her purse. "Well, Taylor comes on the next train and is going straight to The Royal with the boys!"

Sally stood on the other foot.

"Sit down, Sally," urged Miss Lawrence.

"I hate new shoes," admitted Sally, dropping into the proffered chair.

"May I come in?" inquired Sally's mother from without.

It was rather a solemn face that the caretaker brought. She was not in gala dress yet and her hair was still tightly bound in curlers, over these a hair net.

"I'm sorry to lose yer, Miss, indeed I am!" she said, mopping her face with her apron.

"I'm not being lost," Leonora laughed. "I am only going to be married and go home and I want you all to remember me —"

"Remember?"

"Who could help it?"

"Oh, Miss!"

Into the three earnest and admiring faces looked Leonora. She took up something from the bed.

"They're just little remembrances — not even quite new —" She held out to Sally a long chain of seed-coral, though another chain Sally hardly seemed to need. A belt of beaded design she dangled before the caretaker. "It lets out to fit any waist," she said and then she cried, "And oh, I want you all to know I'm just awfully happy."

Sally and her mother were loud in their thanks for the gifts and Pippin and Sally went to the window to look more closely at the coral chain.

"Very good," the caretaker sighed resignedly.

"Of course I'd like to think of you married to an earl —"

"How silly, Mother!" sniffed Sally, slipping on the newest chain which went well with the others. "I just told Mother downstairs," Sally went on, turning to Miss Lawrence, "I told 'er I always believe in marrying your own color and kind. Fancy mixing races up like that! Americans and earls — Father feels the same way!"

"Yes," admitted the caretaker. "Miles is all for the American. I did n't see 'im give Miles anythink last night, neither." Mrs. Miles paused at this idea. "Miles an' me had hoped for your influence to get the Earl's patronage. Miles wanted to get out a sign about it. 'Shoe-maker to the Earl of Clavering,' it'd be the making of 'im — Miles, I mean!"

"For real influence of that sort, apply to Pippin!" Miss Lawrence told them slyly.

"I s'y," suddenly cried the boy; "where's dinner?"

"Bless 'is 'eart!" Pippin drew him closer. "Go an' give Miss Lawrence a kiss for she's going aw'y; then I will give you an' Sally su'think to eat before you start off to the pl'y. And I've su'think ever so nice to tell you!"

He advanced sedately, his face now quite round and merry, raised for the kiss. Leonora took up the little hands, pressed them together upon a gold-

piece and whispering in his ear, "To buy Pippin a present," she kissed him on each cheek.

A cab rolled into the little court below. The visitors rose, expectant. Leonora looked out of the window, stepped to the mirror, and touched at her hat.

"Good-by," she said, turning to them all. "Good-by," she said, again looking over her shoulder at Teddy who stood quite still on his perch, tipping his head questioningly. "Good-by little room, good-by Your Majesty!"

She smiled up at the gentle queen.

"I'll see you off!" insisted the caretaker, following with Sally, little Hal and Pippin, who carried the satchels.

Mr. Browne was waiting.

"These are all my friends," Leonora told him happily.

As he smiled at them all, swinging off his straw hat gallantly, Leonora drew Pippin aside, flashed before her the magic name of Toby Hamilton on a sealed letter and whispered: "Post it, Pippin!"

It was the same Pippin had noticed these two days past in the top chest-drawer. A glance into Miss Lawrence's eyes was enough. She snatched the letter with a triumphant yell.

"I'll post it awright," she chortled.

Mrs. Miles stayed a sudden tear with the tip of her finger, and offered Mr. Browne her hand.

He shook it, shook Sally's — then turned to Pippin.

"We're friends!" he stated, pressing upon her something crisp and rustling.

There was a brief struggle. Emotion must be pumped back at a time when appearances count for everything. Unlucky the bride, reluctantly given.

"Shake hands of the gentleman, Hal!" she reminded with a little tug at his sleeve.

Hal and Mr. Browne though just met, gripped in a man-to-man farewell. Mr. Browne opened the cab door and turned eagerly to Miss Lawrence, his arm slipped round her, drew her from the parting advice of the friendly caretaker, the clinging clasp and loving gaze of little Pippin. Pippin's hand closed the cab door upon them, hers was the last glance that met Leonora's in farewell.

"Remember, we're going to have the loveliest tea, you and I — a great, big, farewell tea! And I'll always be good to His Majesty!"

"Yes, Miss!" very bravely.

But this was to Pippin the real good-by. She had given Miss Lawrence back, back to the American. She went away from Jubilee Court to which Pippin had brought her — his!

The trunk was hoisted, the driver took his seat, the cab rolled away. The flutist trilled a merry, joyful farewell, all unknowingly. Pippin clasped her hands hardly conscious then of the substantial



banknote she held. She looked until the cab had turned.

Miss Lawrence was gone.

The Earl of Clavering leaned over the bar, brooding darkly. He seemed revengefully bent upon taking his displeasure out on Pippin.

"What'd she take the part away from the other girl for, if she did n't care to stick to it? It's not what I'd have looked for — from Miss Lawrence — that's all!"

Pippin eyed him more in sorrow than anger.

"These — *unreliable* Americans!" He hesitated for a stronger word.

"Well, your lordship has got the other un back, now!" flared Pippin, "so that's awright!"

"Ungrateful!" regretted the Earl.

The matter was, the first Miss Nestor was replacing Miss Lawrence in the part. She knew the lines and for lack of another engagement had been her secret understudy at the suggestion of the patriotic and foxy Dicky Rogers.

"That's the kind of acting his lordship wants!" he sniffed whenever he had smuggled the lady into a seat to witness Miss Lawrence's rendition at The Royal.

Privately she was overawed by what could be got out of the part and regretted indulging the temper that had caused her to throw it up; but she

sniffed with Dicky. And now Dicky was up in the air!

"Ungrateful!" muttered the Earl.

"I 'ope you don't mean me, sir," sighed Pippin, "when you 've give me a box party!"

The Earl did not fix the charge but went away muttering. Pippin winked. There was more in this than met the eye, any eye but hers at least. Anger sometimes screens a bleeding heart. It seemed sad for Lady Maude! All being quiet in the barroom, Pippin slipped out, into The Royal behind his lordship. The house was dark. "Miss Nestor's Necklace" was on. Pippin's half-closed, straining eyes found first Sally Taylor's poppy hat in the stage-box. Sally clung to one Pippin took to be Mr. Taylor, the play affecting them both greatly. Mrs. Miles and her cobbler sat hand-in-hand, lost — Dad Raymond looked on, though certainly a little dully. Flossy, handsome in red silk, was holding Hal close to them, his eager little companions, Sally's brothers. The dignified Dandy stood and — Pippin narrowed her doubting gaze! But, yes it was — beside him Mr. Bertram Granville, Dandy's master, the playwright.

Apparent indeed was his appreciation of the leading lady his play was about to lose. Here a wilful tear started but was quickly suppressed. It was to happiness Miss Lawrence was going, Pippin recalled. Just then Dad Raymond flopped, sank

sideways, but Flossie was there, prompt with a remindingful elbow. Pippin laughed softly.

"Thank Gawd for everythink," she murmured with a contented sigh.

THE END

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